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ABSTRACT

A changing mix of forces and actors occupy the educational leadership stage. The fragmentation and curious distribution of decision-making power frustrate the workings of the education system. Twelve articles discuss the nature of the leadership problem: (1) "Education's Unknown Leaders"; (2) "Tribunes for the Schools"; (3) "Few Perks, Little Respect"; (4) "The Working Environment"; (5) "Gurus and Gatekeepers"; (6) "Leadership by Commission"; (7) "The Training Jumble"; (8) "The Teaching Imperative"; (9) "The Inadequate Incubators of Leadership"; (10) "Changing the Mix"; (11) "Three Ticking Time Bombs"; and (12) "A Dozen Propositions." Interspersed throughout the collection are seven profiles of a cross-section of the nation's top educators: Bill Clinton, Ronald A. Wolk, Richard R. Green, Marc S. Tucker, Mary Hatwood Futrell, Terrel H. Bell, and Joe Clark. (66 references) (SI)

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WHO RUNS OUR SCHOOLS

CHANGING FACE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

GEORGE KAPLAN

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WHO RUNS OUR SCHOOLS?

The Changing Face of Educational Leadership

George R. Kaplan

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To William L. Smith
and
Samuel Halperin
Leaders who make good things happen

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FOREWORD

As the nationwide push to improve our schools nears its second decade, the agenda of still-unanswered questions shows few signs of diminishing. High on that list is the largely unexamined issue of how and by whom education's policies are to be shaped and carried out. What kinds of people decide what and how our children are to be taught? Where do they come from? Even more to the point, are they up to their jobs? And if they aren't, what can be done about it?

To explore these matters is to face up to the paradoxes and inconsistencies that brand our political system. In education, in particular, the fragmentation and curious distribution of decision-making power often frustrate a simple explanation of how the system works. Moreover, the mix is changing as different forces and actors occupy center stage. There are far more well-placed experts dispensing their wise but often contradictory counsel. Reform commissions have exerted enormous influence in the 1980s at a time when our governors and state legislators have vigorously reasserted their authority over the schools. Far from least, the nation's business leaders are rapidly becoming a key ingredient in the recipe for contemporary educational leadership.

But some things are largely unchanged. The vast majority of education's chiefs are appointed, not elected, and the value of their preparation is open to debate. As a nation, we tend to judge our schools and the quality of their leaders by the criteria of an earlier, less complicated time when we and today's policy-makers were students in the classroom. Sad to relate, too, women and members of minority groups remain woefully underrepresented in education's executive suites and corridors of power.

In keeping with the Institute for Educational Leadership's 25-year commitment to promoting excellence in school leadership, we are pleased to publish *Who Runs Our Schools? The Changing Face of Educational Leadership*, a provocative and unconventional contribution to a long-overdue look at these topics. Some of the main theses of this glimpse of the people who run and influence public education may work against the grain of accepted wisdom, while others may never see the light of day beyond the pages of this insightful little book. But we feel safe in saying that *Who Runs Our Schools?* offers illuminating, sometimes even unwelcome, perspectives for everyone—particularly politicians, corporate executives,

and the caring public—to chew on. For those already in education, it may provide a useful and broadened redefinition of what being an authority figure in education is coming to mean.

Interspersed throughout *Who Runs Our Schools?* are lively profiles of a cross-section of the nation's top educators. These are intended as illustrative and not as a *Who's Who* of the best and the brightest. Such a definitive listing could surely have included at least five members of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Educational Leadership—Gregory R. Anrig, Harold Howe II, James A. Kelly, Floretta D. McKenzie, and Albert Shanker—as well as several dozen other distinguished educators. The purpose of this publication is not to describe those already in the winner's circle; its central thesis is that we need to take a larger, perhaps quite different, look at the urgent matter of attracting, preparing, and retaining the best possible people to govern the nation's schools. Our children deserve no less.

William S. Woodside
Former Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer
Primerica Corporation
and
Chairman, IEL Board of Directors

Michael D. Usdan
President
Institute for
Educational Leadership

1 Education's Unknown Leaders

When it comes to public education, we are a nation of zealous moderates. We say we will do almost anything to have top-flight schools, but we back only cosmetic adjustments in a system that everyone says isn't working well enough. We rarely agree on why and how the generation-long decline in the quality of our schools placed "a nation at risk." Many of us fix the blame on misplaced national priorities or the changing global economy or history-making shifts in family living patterns. Others are convinced that a near-diabolical convergence of lousy teachers, rotten kids, and the legacy of the valueless 1960s almost did the schools in. Curiously and inexplicably for a society that routinely identifies culprits by name and rank, almost no one points an accusing finger at the people who run the schools.

Curiously and inexplicably . . . almost no one points an accusing finger at the people who run the schools.

The shapers of educational policies and decisions have stayed out of the spotlight for a variety of reasons:

- They present a fuzzy image because there are so many of them, and we aren't entirely certain who's in charge. Counting the politicians, school board members, and bureaucrats (including school principals), the total tops 200,000. But the buck doesn't stop at one desk; it keeps moving—in a variety of directions.
- The copious reports on educational reform, including *A Nation at Risk*[1] which granted them only superficial recognition, failed to single policy-makers out as a force in the schools. Except for a few mild worries about school principals and administrators, we have heard almost nothing—positive, negative, or simply analytical—about how the key decision-makers are doing their job.
- Most of the most visible spokespersons for and about the schools—outstanding people like Mary Hatwood Futrell, Theodore Sizer, Ernest Boyer, Albert Shanker, and John Goodlad, among several dozen others—are not on the firing line making command decisions. They are inordinately useful commentators and interest group representatives, but they bear no measurable responsibility for how the schools are doing.
- The brunt of national concern about school people in the

1980s has landed on teachers. This has deflected serious attention from the officials who hire and supervise them, pay and promote them, and tell them what and how to teach.

- To analyze the real leaders is to analyze ourselves, for we elected the governors, the legislators, and most of the school board members who control the enterprise. Besides, many of the loudest critics of the schools are educators—witness the composition of the reform commissions—and educators are notoriously reluctant to tangle with politicians, let alone bite the feeding hand.

When Secretary of Defense Caspar M. Weinberger left the Pentagon in late 1987 he could reflect on a nearly seven-year stewardship as the U.S. military's civilian boss. In title and fact, he had been chairman of the board, chief executive officer, and cheerleader-in-chief of what his backers lauded as a superb fighting machine and his detractors ridiculed as a bloated and obscenely expensive bureaucratic nightmare. However they judged him, Mr. Weinberger had become a powerful, if intractable, personality on the policy stage, and a legitimate celebrity to boot. From above and below, from the President and the armed services, he received nearly uncritical support throughout his duty tour. The protests of his critics were ignored as the Weinberger agenda garnered the largest military budget in history. Queen Elizabeth knighted him after he left office.

Can any leader of consequence look back on an even remotely similar presence on the educational scene? In our third century as a free nation, with mandatory schooling for all, do we even have an educational leader of consequence?

The comparisons and questions are not entirely fair, but neither are they unreasonable. Although only half as costly as national defense, education nevertheless is, along with health services, one of the nation's two top employers. Its reach is limitless and all-embracing. Its main component, public education, may be the most powerful of our institutions. Principal George McKenna, recently of George Washington Preparatory School in Los Angeles, observes, "... it is the only institution that requires by law that citizens participate in its programs, at a time when those citizens are in their most vulnerable condition—childhood ..."[2]

... the management and conduct of education in America are neither linear nor hierarchical.

Unlike Secretary Weinberger's former domain, the management and conduct of education in America are neither linear nor hierarchical. Cause does not automatically yield planned effect as it usually does in the peacetime military services. Lines of authority and responsibility are confusing,

out of focus, or both. Lately, it has become fashionable to dismiss education's jumble of administrative layers, specialties, and responsibilities—and the people who represent them—as a hopeless, unmanageable blob. How can it be otherwise, commentators ask, when real authority is so haphazardly scattered and so little consensus exists on education's very purposes and goals?

Like politics, sports, and television, education sparks instant popular expertise and critical analysis. We know the score. We know precisely what we want and expect for our children. Or we think we do, whether or not we honestly understand how education and the world have changed since our school days. Even while professing support for the schools, we accord but glancing recognition to their leaders, especially the higher-ups in the boardrooms and legislative chambers. Subconsciously, we may believe that the feats of American education have occurred in spite of them. Small wonder that they are trapped in the hell of a cleft stick—often unsure of their constituencies, and universally under-appreciated. And the administrative juggernaut that policy-makers must deal with in the schools keeps expanding. In the 1980s, to take one of many cases, there was some kind of administrator, supervisor, or coordinator for every five classroom teachers.[3] It is hard to explain away such numbers. The only semi-plausible justifications turn inward: More bureaucracy becomes the proper response to education's calls for help.

Even when professing support for the schools, we accord but glancing recognition to their leaders, especially the higher-ups in the boardrooms and legislative chambers.

The bibliography on leadership is growing fast. Few subjects have become more voguish in the 1980s, notably in the corporate world. Scholarship in the field is experiencing an unanticipated mini-boom. More than 600 post-secondary institutions offer course work in leadership while defying the skeptics, some of them prodigiously informed on the subject, who proclaim it an unlearnable, personal gift possessed by a favored few. Even some respected practitioners grossly oversimplify this vital dimension of public policy. President John Brademas of New York University, a respected U.S. Representative in Congress for 22 years, contends that "Leadership can be summed up in two words—intelligence and integrity, or to use two synonyms, competence and character."[4] Another distinguished expert who has examined leadership as thoroughly as anyone in the nation for over 30 years reports that he and his colleagues now define it simply as "the exercise of influence."[5] Others depict it as a precise science or noble art that lends itself admirably to classroom instruction and laboratory experimentation.

Whether art, science, or rare personal attribute (it is

Bill Clinton: Education Governor in High Gear

The political hills are alive with the sounds of education governors. Education has come to center stage in the state capitals, and the leading actors there, the nation's governors, are more profoundly concerned about it than at any time in our history. The lineup of recent and sitting education governors is formidable. Alexander of Tennessee, Hunt of North Carolina, Riley of South Carolina, Branstad of Iowa, Winter of Mississippi, Orr of Indiana, Robb of Virginia, Kean of New Jersey, and standing tall among these and others, young Bill Clinton of Arkansas.

"Arkansas," a faculty member at its state university has written, "is a mousetrap for governors. The chief executive never has enough power or resources to truly govern." That the state ranks near the national statistical bottom in education, income, quality of jobs, and reservoirs of capital does little to enhance an Arkansas governor's profile. Even on its best days, the state seems to exude a relaxed acceptance of its hillbilly backwardness. For Bill Clinton's legislative program, "Making Arkansas Work: Good Beginnings, Good Schools, Good Jobs," to succeed will demand "not only leadership but also boldness, shrewdness, imagination, and old-fashioned horse-trading."

No area of his gubernatorial mandate has occupied more of Bill Clinton's prodigious intellectual energies than education. It is debatable whether any other sitting governor in the nation, with the possible exception of Thomas Kean of New Jersey, is in his league as a knowledgeable apostle of the schools. By both personal inclination and the imperatives of Arkansas politics, he is the embodiment of the new breed of education governors. Simultaneously Chairman of the education-oriented National Governors' Association (NGA) and the Education Commission of the States (ECS) in 1986-87, Clinton calls achieving and maintaining higher school standards "the main mission I have in public life." This is not demagogic sloganeering; a four-term governor at 41, Bill Clinton personifies commitment to the schools.

Even for a Rhodes scholar and graduate of Yale University's School of Law, the charge to improve the schools of Arkansas has often appeared intractable. Progress until 1983 was sub-incremental, and when Clinton appointed an Education Standards Committee that year public enthusiasm was easily contained. But Clinton and the Committee's surprise appointee as chairperson, his gifted lawyer wife Hillary Rodham Clinton, sparked long-latent concern by pointing out in convincing fashion that improving

education was imperative if the state was to keep pace with the rest of the nation. Spurred to action by this central fact of Arkansas life and by a state supreme court decision requiring a new formula for distributing money to school districts, the legislature held a special, education-only session that autumn. Out of it came a narrow victory for Bill and Hillary Clinton: increased teacher pay, more equitable distribution of state education funds, smaller class sizes, longer school days and school year, stiffer curricular requirements, periodic tests of student mastery of basic skills, and, in by far the most controversial action, a requirement that all teachers, beginners and veterans alike, submit to competency tests. This provision put Arkansas on the national education map but infuriated teachers and their unions. Clinton never displayed a speck of doubt that teacher testing was a sound idea.

The economy of Arkansas has been shaky and the path to educational reform bumpy. The Clintons have had to take to the road regularly with the reminder that "even Mississippi is ahead of us now." Never strong, the state's tax system requires top to bottom restructuring, but this may not happen in the near future. Meanwhile, the state's teachers ranked a dismal 49th in the nation in annual salary, some $6,000 less than the national average, and many school districts were in pathetic financial shape. Against this backdrop, the progress rate of the education governor of Arkansas seems to be two steps forward, three back, and another one or one and one-half forward—after a decent interval.

Bill Clinton is not a one dimensional politician, nor does he pose as a revolutionary reformer. Intellectually and operationally comfortable with all of the issues of state government, he simply recognizes—and gives substance to—the bedrock position of the schools in furthering economic and personal well-being. Alone among high level political figures, he has zeroed in on the urgent matter of school leadership, first as chair of the Task Force on School Leadership and Management for the NGA and later, in his role as Chairman of EC'S, as author of *Speaking of Leadership*, a strong plea for improved direction of the schools. Although this report blazes no new trails in educational leadership, the close familiarity of the young governor with such national developments as Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, the state of Washington's Schools for the 21st Century, and the tryout of "Carnegie schools" in Massachusetts, for example, is almost unprecedented among political leaders. Already mentioned as a potential candidate for national office, Clinton was rated in a 1986 *Newsweek* poll of his fellow governors as one of the five most effective governors in the nation. He is a priceless asset to public education.

doubtless all three), leadership as an issue is all over the place, no less so in education, where it seems to mean building principals and district superintendents, than in government, business, communications, or science, where it embraces straw bosses as well as chief executive officers. It may supplant excellence, literacy, and reform—or any of ten others—as the educational catchword of a decade in which no significant endeavor escaped a bruising, often embarrassingly personal, examination of its leadership. At one extreme, the nature of Presidential leadership was under constant scrutiny as the nation endured the Iran-Contra affair and wondered aloud about the evident lack of direction in our economic policy. At the other end, sponsors of routine professional or technical meetings in any field could bill them as future-oriented leadership seminars and automatically increase attendance. Curricular supervisors and resource specialists in education's trenches no longer were the teacher's expert outside helpers; they had become "instructional leaders" in their own right, even when leadership, by the most liberal definition, simply is not their function. But the legislator or state board member who may have designed and drafted a state's educational blueprint and budget, and shepherded them through the political maze, is only fleetingly regarded as an educational leader. Definitional consistency, to paraphrase Mr. Emerson, may be the hobgoblin of the inelastic mind.

The leadership of American education is a mass of contradictions and incompatibilities.

The leadership of American education is a mass of contradictions and incompatibilities. Sometimes it is the personification of participatory democracy in action. Then it may revert quickly to arbitrary authoritarianism. Like a smart teenager, it can display prodigious insight and ignorance almost simultaneously. It can be flexible, rigid, compassionate, and unthinkingly mean-spirited—all in the same transaction. It is, in other words, an unkempt bureaucracy in which the sum is less than the parts, which number some 97,000 policy-making local school board members, 7,461 omnipotent state legislators, 15,000-odd district superintendents, 50 chief state school officers, 670 members of standards-setting state education boards, 95,000-odd on-the-scene building principals, and, hovering low over this shapeless heap, 50 ambitious state governors who care about the schools in 1989 as they did not in 1969. In its heart of hearts, each of these groups would like to believe that it, and not the others, is the truly indispensable link in the leadership chain.

If the literature of the school reform wave of the 1980s is to be believed, all are wrong. Along with the teachers' unions, the media, and the U.S. Government, they are depicted as lesser or

non-existent actors in the quest for better public schools for the 40 million-plus children who attend and the 2.8 million adults who teach them. Report after report on school improvement ignores or overlooks the people whose direction and guidance will inevitably be decisive forces in determining whether the schools will improve or not. Only the governors, in their blunt *Time for Results*,[6] have actually defined their leadership role and offered some cogent ideas about managing our schools. They make by far the best case for who is really in charge: themselves.

But the issue of who is up or down stirs little interest in the late 1980s. Though state and local school boards may have felt neglected in the early days of the decade's school reform movement, and state legislatures are often regarded as having completed their contributions to it before 1986, all of the authority groups are making more policy than ever. According to Alan Rosenthal and Susan Fuhrman of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, who monitor power shifts in education, there is more than enough leadership-type work to go around. Everyone is on the school reform bandwagon.[7] This point is essential. Rivalries among authority groups may have had bitter overtones in the early days of the 1980s' reform thrust, but they played a far less significant role as the movement matured.

That the governors nevertheless have the most clout and are always ready to flaunt it should come as no surprise. Across the board, they are among the most potent figures in American life. They have been business leaders, war heroes, career politicians, Rhodes Scholars, Members of Congress, and high federal officials—with an occasional professor or automobile dealer to season the mix. Some of them become Presidents. They live daily with mega-problems of vast complexity and impact. The least known and least effective among them are magnetic enough to attract the votes of hundreds of thousands, even millions, of their fellow citizens. Whatever their other preferences as to issues, all are finger-tip sensitive to the crucial place education occupies, as a social-economic force and a top-priority budget item, in the lives of their states. The governor foolish enough to downplay education in the late 1980s courts political and career oblivion, for every governor in the nation fervently proclaims education's primary role in enhancing the long-range prosperity of the state. It is this widely-held conviction, more than any legal or statutory responsibility, that defines the true place of governors in education. The historic reversion of political power to the states which began a generation ago and

The governor foolish enough to downplay education courts political . . . oblivion . . .

accelerated in the 1980s has powerfully reinforced it.

At other points along the decision-making spectrum, legislators, board members, activists and publicists, and educational executives with designs on power present less distinct images. The only publicly elected officials in America who devote full time to education are a handful of chief state school officers and school district superintendents (more than 95 percent of the 15,000-odd are appointed)—fewer than one percent of the 100,000-plus legislators and school board members who regularly face the voters. Leaving out school principals, the part-timers far outnumber the professionals, whether elected or appointed. Some even do double duty: educators as legislators or union officials, bureaucrats and students as board members and *vice versa*, and other unlikely combinations and cross-overs. Education tops some personal priority lists but ranks low on others. For some policy-makers, a visible post in education is a short step on a career path to politics or other sectors of public service. The route from PTA activist to school board member to county council member or state legislator is well-traveled.

The prototypical educational leader does not exist in the hundred-flowers-blooming culture of America's schools.

The prototypical educational leader does not exist in the hundred-flowers-blooming culture of America's schools. The span from young female principal to good old boy legislator discourages stereotyping. Precise assessments, or even descriptions, of the members of the six or seven key role groups that make policy on education are no longer possible. What they were 25 years ago is not what they are today. Only two facts about them have validity: They have improved, and they are busier than ever.

Taken at face value, a cross-sectional look at the individual power groups in public education yields a picture of people who do not vary pronouncedly from their approximate peers elsewhere in the society in age, gender, educational attainment, attitudes, and earnings. School executives from principal to superintendent, to take the most or, more accurately, the only closely examined groups, are mostly married white Protestant males in the 45-55 year age bracket with two college degrees and change, moderate political views, and extroverted personalities, who earn slightly less than $1,000 for each year of age. This simplified composite, which appeared in the *Executive Educator* in September 1988,[8] could also have been drawn from the far more ambitious federally-funded *Profile of School Administrators in the United States* by the private National Center for Education Information (NCEI), which in January 1988 had

called public school superintendents and principals "an old boys' club."[9]

Both of these sources are doubtless factually valid. But hard statistical data and the yields from government-approved questionnaires fail, as these do, to spotlight the vital human differences between leaders in Alliance, Nebraska, and those in the Robert Taylor Homes housing project in Chicago, Illinois. They do not convey the crucial messages about themselves that school leaders must transmit. It is difficult and unwise to embrace judgments about thinking professionals that are backed mainly by the cold tabulations of the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. To do so is to accept baseball records that show Zeke Bonura of the Chicago White Sox and Washington Senators of the pre-World War II era to have been the best fielder of the American League's first basemen of his time. Unfortunately, the estimable Bonura had neither grace nor mobility; he simply caught or fielded every ball that came straight to him and passed up the more difficult error-inducing plays that more agile fielders would try to make. Thus his statistics, thus theirs. Or, as a political commentator observed of President Ronald Reagan and his critics, "He has his facts; the scholars and experts have theirs."

It is . . . unwise to embrace judgments about thinking professionals that are backed . . . by the cold tabulations of the . . . Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2 TRIBUNES FOR THE SCHOOLS

No single person, whether President or U.S. Secretary of Education or classroom teacher, can speak for American education. We have no national policy, no binding national standards, and, with the possible exception of commercial network television, no national curriculum. No "education Senator" or U.S. Representative stands out from the rest in promoting education's case in the U.S. Congress. The average college graduate who can readily identify 300 athletes and entertainers by name probably could not name five educational leaders, after a decade of sustained publicity on the schools and Presidential primary and election campaigns bursting with future "education Presidents."

We have no national policy, no binding national standards, and . . . no national curriculum.

Yet education has occupied front-burner status in public policy since 1983. Statements reiterating its non-negotiable primacy in national life echo throughout public life in America. The dozen or so Presidential aspirants who debated across the land in 1987 and early 1988 unfailingly voiced their devotion to education though few had given it sustained legislative or policy-making attention. But their almost predictable main message was that the main purpose of education must be to help the country to recoup its presumably lost international economic superiority, and only secondarily to develop an educated, self-respecting citizenry.

To the despair of right-thinking supporters of the schools, education as a topic of public concern on the national stage often materializes as a shapeless and boring time-killer. Leadership in this setting has little clarity or definition. The Democratic Presidential aspirants who debated educational issues in September 1987 in North Carolina were ill at ease with the subject matter and distinctly unsure of their facts. A historic first, the debate did little to reassure either the profession or the voters that the next generation of political leaders was better informed than its predecessors. In an oft-reported observation, the Reverend Jesse Jackson told the audience, "Whoever can keep your attention tonight during this debate on education deserves to be your next President."[1] As the campaign wore along, and the candidates kept issuing well-worn banalities about the schools—and how they had let

business down—quips of this type were too close to the bone for comfort.

Keeping popular attention fastened on the schools can be a daunting task. Adults whose children have finished their formal schooling rapidly lose interest in the subject. Statistics and research on education are of such uneven quality, and often have so little connection to gut issues, that responsible tribunes for education do not fully trust them. The size, variety, and contradictions of the enterprise simply overwhelm analysts and commentators, while its lack of newsworthy drama underwhelms them. Some of the wisest publicists of education are those who stick to their specialties, refusing to believe that preeminence in one quarter automatically confers omniscience in all. The practical matter of affiliation with a role or interest group, or an institution, inhibits some who may be inclined to break out. Only a foolhardy superintendent, for example, would pontificate publicly and repeatedly on the diminishing role of the school board in curricular matters. And the ambitious education school dean at a state university who insisted on challenging the merits of the legislative appropriations process might find sticky going in future budgetary battles.

If few can speak FOR education, who can speak wisely ABOUT it in its larger dimensions—about its economics, governance, staff, content, culture, and future? Such people exist, but they comprise a surprisingly short list. The names of some, largely unknown outside of education, are: Denis Doyle, Hudson Institute; Edward Meade, Ford Foundation; Asa Hilliard, Georgia State University; Terry Hartle, U.S. Senate staff; John Goodlad, University of Washington; Arthur Wise and Linda Darling-Hammond, Rand Corporation; Milbrey McLaughlin, David Tyack, Marshall Smith, Henry Levin, Lee Shulman, Larry Cuban, and Michael Kirst, Stanford University; Willis Hawley and Chester Finn, Vanderbilt University; Mark Tucker, National Center on Education and the Economy; Albert Shanker, American Federation of Teachers (AFT); Lawrence Cremin, Dale Mann, and P. Michael Timpane, Columbia University; Michael Cohen, National Governors' Association; Ernest Boyer, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; Harold Hodgkinson, Institute for Educational Leadership; Robert Spillane, Fairfax County (VA.) Public Schools; Lauren Resnick, University of Pittsburgh; David Hornbeck, formerly of the Maryland Department of Education; Gregory Anrig, Educational Testing Service; Harold Howe, Harvard University; James Kelly, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; David Cohen, Richard

. . . the wisdom of those who can speak with authority about, if not for, education, goes largely unnoticed . . .

Elmore, Judith Lanier, and Gary Sykes, Michigan State University; Gordon Ambach, Council of Chief State School Officers; Theodore Sizer, Brown University; John Jennings, U.S. House of Representatives staff; Herbert Walberg, University of Chicago; Thomas Payzant, San Diego (CA.) Public Schools; Bill Honig, California Department of Education; Susan Fuhrman, Rutgers University; Linda McNeil, Rice University; Terrel Bell, University of Utah, and perhaps 35-40 additional thoughtful observers and leaders, for a total of approximately 75. This is a tiny number for such a massive chunk of our collective experience as Americans.

Most of this small cadre of large-picture experts are case-hardened veterans who have been at or near education's nerve centers since long before the school reform movement of the 1980s began. Their commentary is informed and responsible, only occasionally negative or headline-creating. All work from an institutional or well-endowed organizational home base but can speak independently without looking over their shoulders at an irate pursuing constituency. They are wondrously articulate and self-confident—not a shrinking violet or wallflower in the bunch. Many have had duty tours in Washington, service which has provided them with an appreciation of the strengths and limitations of the federal presence in education, and, perhaps even more valuable in the long run, an often-elusive national perspective, not just on education but on its relevance to and connections with the human services and other quarters of national concern. Most are accomplished fund-raisers who know their way around the world of philanthropy and grants. By and large, their student days came well before the 1960s. They are reformers, not revolutionaries; their forte is policy analysis, not barricade-storming. And, although some manage large organizations, they are educational leaders because of their brainpower, not the managerial competence that many of them also possess.

Regrettably, the wisdom of those who can speak with authority about, if not for, education goes largely unnoticed because of the character of media treatment of education and our response to it. We have become a media-addicted society with a ravenous appetite for information, entertainment, small talk, and inspiration. Our addiction has been an often-underestimated verity of American life since the arrival of television in our homes 40 years, or two generations, ago. A 1980s child can truthfully say that his or her grandparents were also television babies whose out-of-school knowledge came in large measure in the short bites, "headline news," and stylized, commercially driven output of network television.

Education has been largely unable to capitalize on our obsession with the media.

Ronald A. Wolk: Telling It Like It Is

The trade press in education numbers in the thousands (yes, thousands) of journals, magazines, and newsletters. Some are free, while others run up to $500 for an annual subscription. All but a small fraction mirror the concerns and attitudes of their sponsors: professional associations, institutions, and a limitless assortment of groups with points to prove and promote. Many are obscure, and deservedly so; they find their market in the community of dues-paying scholars who use them to swap scholarly esoterica with their peers. In a week of non-stop reading, the most gifted graduate of a course in reading dynamics would scarcely dent a month's accumulation. Staying abreast of education's story demands exceptional selectivity—or a subscription to *Education Week*, "American education's newspaper of record."

The good news about *Education Week* is that it saw its first drop of fiscal black ink in mid-1987. The bad news is that EW didn't come along a decade earlier. Since it burst from the journalistic starting gate in September 1981 with but 12,000 subscriptions in hand, *Education Week* has been exactly what its founder and only editor Ronald A. Wolk planned that it would be: an attractive, comprehensive, and unbiased weekly account of American education that treats its readers as the professional people they are. As its paid circulation climbed to the 60,000 range in 1988, educational leaders were calling it "required reading," "a sterling publication," and "a news source of extraordinary value." TIME said it merited an A.

Education Week is the product of exhaustive pre-publication analysis, an eight-month feasibility study, and the salutary experience of its role model, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the other major class act in educational journalism. But without the persistence and vision of Wolk, a journalist-turned-university administrator who left a vice-presidency at Brown University to start it, *Education Week* would not have happened. The idea of a weekly *Chronicle*-style tabloid for elementary and secondary school education had captured his imagination even before the first tremors of school reform in the late 1970s. By late 1980, with $500,000 available from foundations and the sale of the *Chronicle* by Editorial Projects in Education, EW's nonprofit parent body, the package was ready for assembling. It took an additional $1.75 million in foundation backing to survive the first four years. The wolf was forever gnawing at the door.

A typical EW issue of 32 or 36 pages blends topical national coverage, in-depth feature stories, trends analysis, regional summaries, commentary from respected non-staff experts, photos, and short takes—but no hint of a partisan editorial policy. The paper takes no sides on the issues and puts no spin on its stories. Yet it captures what Wolk calls "the relevance and feistiness of precollegiate schooling." A particular strength is its uncanny ability to spot trends and birddog them to maturity or extinction. Special pull-out reports on such topics as schooling in Japan, demographics, bilingual education, and effective schools have been timely and authoritative. No less important in the EW design has been coverage of nitty-gritty teaching and learning developments in the classroom.

Though it houses a working professional newspaper, *Education Week*'s Washington headquarters evokes memories of a graduate school student lounge. Wolk and Executive Editor Martha K. Matzke originally intended to hire experienced education beat reporters from metropolitan dailies but quickly learned that these journalists were not for *Education Week*. Most wanted more money than the new weekly could afford, and they had already made up their minds about educational issues. Instead, Wolk went for brainy young graduates of liberal arts colleges who could write and had less than two years of journalistic experience. The decision has paid off. The newspaper gets excellent, often inspired, educational reporting.

The impact of *Education Week* resists quantification, but mounting evidence suggests that its discriminating coverage of school reform has become a strong, if undervalued, force in defining and even shaping it. Thousands of political and educational leaders get their basic information on educational change from EW. Stories on important new reforms in Rochester, New York, and Dade County, Florida, for example, spurred enormous interest throughout public education.

Ron Wolk is campaigning for foundation support to help put copies of *Education Week* in every school library and teachers' room in the country. If he encounters moderate success and paid circulation rises appreciably, he will expand the paper's features, create new sections, devote more space to book reviews, venture into investigative reporting, and otherwise upgrade an already remarkable journalistic product. He is also developing a new national monthly magazine for America's teachers for launching in the fall of 1989. However it develops, *Education Week* will continue to treat educators at all levels as trained professionals who need attractively presented information that is both balanced and accurate.

And education has not been one of the tube's favorite subjects.

Education has been largely unable to capitalize on our obsession with the media. As attention-grabbing theater in any medium, schooling has always played poorly even during its infrequent spurts to the top of the news. The media find little drama in daily school life or educational politics, and not much more in once-outrageous but now routine reporting on teenage sex and pregnancy, the school drug culture, violence in the schools, and teachers' strikes. Stories about the inadequacies of urban schools have become old hat at a time when the subject demands hard thinking and careful action. Documentary TV programs on education traditionally score low in the ratings wars that determine what will appear on our screens, while even the best of a limited selection of education-related drama or comedy series usually struggle for survival from the moment they appear. Motion pictures that center on education themes are box-office poison, while commercial radio's coverage of education is negligible unless the interested listener happens to be awake at 6:30 A.M. every other Sunday to benefit from a local station's obligatory public service broadcasts.

As attention-grabbing theatre in any medium, schooling has always played poorly . . .

Inconsistency and unevenness characterize education coverage by both the print and electronic media. The only nationally syndicated newspaper columns on education are those of the leaders of the national teachers' unions. The weekly offering of the AFT's Albert Shanker is a paid advertisement that has appeared since the mid-1970s in the Sunday *New York Times* and is picked up *gratis*, more or less regularly, by 80-100 additional newspapers. Mary Hatwood Futrell of the National Education Association produces an NEA-underwritten biweekly column which began to appear in the *Washington Post* in 1984 and runs intermittently in 85 newspapers, also *gratis*, around the country. Although they have on-air specialists for sports, business, science, and politics, the three TV networks employ no education correspondents, and their treatment of the reform movement has been streaky and superficial. Not until 1986 did the *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour*, which appears on the more cerebral but far less popular Public Broadcasting Service, get around to hiring John Merrow, a prize-winning commentator of National Public Radio, to cover education.

The failure of print journalism's major players to convey a steady and balanced reckoning of the successes, problems, and prospects of education is reprehensible. Although educational "news" is scattered through most newspapers and news magazines it is rarely found in journals of opinion from

left to right—*The Nation* on the left through the hybrid *New Republic* somewhere near the middle to *The National Review* on the right—and usually focuses on the political, the spectacular, the negative, or the aberrational. As a general rule, big-city education reporters are among their newspapers' least experienced journalists, and most have no intention of remaining stuck on the low-prestige school beat. Such top newspapers as the *New York Times* (which has greatly expanded its coverage since mid-1987), the Boston *Globe*, and the *Los Angeles Times* often have managed to retain excellent people in education, which is reflected directly in the steady volume and high quality of their coverage, but most ambitious reporters consider it to be a pedestrian assignment. Recognition is lacking and criticism is heavy. Among nationally syndicated columnists, the prospects for informed commentary on schools and schooling are even more dismal. To Evans and Novak, Anderson, Kilpatrick, Wicker, Will and all but one or two others (William Raspberry is a signal exception), there simply is no continuing story in the nation's schools. Education, to most national columnists, is what they experienced a generation or two ago, and they see little need to change that. Only in TIME, NEWSWEEK, *USA Today*, and in the newspapers of middle America's cities and towns does education receive a reasonably fair shake. But the small city press understandably concentrates on critical local issues, a useful and necessary function but one that inhibits discussion of longer-range issues.

. . . the treatment [by the three commercial TV networks] of the reform movement has been streaky and superficial.

3 Few Perks, Little Respect

The culture of public school education does not normally reward leaders who take risks or challenge established practice or dogma. It prizes competence and integrity more highly, but these are considered givens, even when they are in short supply. In the organizational settings where public education functions, orderliness and anonymity are the guiding principles. Unless the scent of scandal is in the air, most citizens would be unable to name either the school superintendent or the school board chairperson of their local district.

In the organizational settings where public education functions, orderliness and anonymity are the guiding principles.

In education as elsewhere, public service is neither a haven for rejects from corporate society nor an insulated perch from which to observe decaying institutions. It is presumably what involvement and responsibility are about. But few measurable benefits compensate for the frustrations and humiliations that dot the educational policy-maker's professional existence. To be a leader in education is to submerge one's distinctive identity. "In a complex operation," comments biographer Garry Wills, "individualism is irregularity, a nuisance and obstruction."[1] And education is an indisputably complex affair. Its leaders are ultimately responsible, in varying degrees and circumstances, to students, parents, teachers, administrators, elected or appointed school boards, the media, state political and administrative authority, the courts, even the U.S. Congress, and, of course, the public at large. These days, we learn that they are additionally accountable to the business interests of their communities. Their peers in the private economy may make analogous claims, but when stacked against the bedrock realities of the life of a key decision-maker in education, these claims are a catalogue of shallow pieties. The "service to others" concept, says former U.S. Naval Chief of Operations James D. Watkins, is central to "the ethos of a 'caring society' " and "fundamental to continuation of the American dream."[2] This is the salient that education's top guns occupy. And it confers on them a level and scope of professional and ultimately personal responsibility shared by few other Americans.

Whatever their place in the governing hierarchy, or their

political or philosophical differences, the people who run our schools are bullish about public service, children, and the higher potential of good schools. Beyond this common ground, though, there are only hints of a shared ideological mystique and few signs of the inspirational drive that might link them to other authority figures in the country. More perhaps than most others, they must be alert to what psychologist Michael Maccoby calls "the anti-leadership spirit of democratic society, the rejection of the domineering and paternalistic models of the past."[3] For each authoritarian or demagogic figure who may materialize with a neatly wrapped fad of the year to cure education's alleged woes, dozens more prefer to furnish the drumbeat in its rhythm section. Without drummers, bands lack precision and definition. Like thoughtful educational leaders, good drummers are rarely heard—a virtue, perhaps, in musical circles but a dubious quality in the messy arena of educational politics, where control is sometimes up for grabs and some of the grabbers don't comprehend how big the stakes really are.

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Lacking the clout to control or pull the strings of real power, education's authority figures must adjust to serving other masters and ends. In this they are nearly unique among leaders. Unlike their approximate opposite numbers in the military, business, and most other sectors, they are never really sure where they stand. Popular and legislative support often hinges on the extent to which education is judged to help other parts of the economy and society as well as local goals. Much of Lyndon B. Johnson's success in forging a strong federal role in the mid-1960s stemmed from his persuasive argument to the U.S. Congress that education was the best route to economic and social equality. A few years earlier, the Soviet penetration of space had precipitated a sudden national awareness of our deficiencies in teaching science and foreign languages. Today we assume that the key attribute of a better-educated future workforce is that it helps to keep America on top. Only infrequently these days do we hear that a good education is a social or personal good unto itself. None of this is calculated to bolster the egos of education's leading lights, who believe in what they do for a living.

One customary feature of a system of inferior psychic rewards is an equally inferior system of financial benefits. No educational leaders are starving in America. Up and down the system salaries and benefits are rising. According to the private National Center for Education Information, more than half of the nation's school superintendents were earning more

than $50,000 in 1987.[4] That is the good news, and no one in education is protesting it by backing up to the pay window. For many, though, it is far too little much too late. In 1986 only six salaried employees in public school education—five superintendents and one chief state school officer—received six-figure salaries. In the same year, the average annual income of all of the nation's doctors—not just the leaders of the medical profession—was $119,500, and nearly all of the full partners in urban law firms received at least that much. The $100,000-plus level was rapidly becoming the norm, not the outer limit as in education, for experts and managers throughout the senior and upper-middle levels of business, communications, science, and most of the professions. And financial sacrifice was no longer fashionable in the not-for-profit world, where the earnings of hospital managers, executive directors of trade associations, and heads of foundations, among many others, soared well into the six-digit bracket in the mid- and late 1980s.

The gap between the treatment of education's best and brightest and their peers elsewhere in the workplace widens further under closer scrutiny. Bonuses for outstanding leadership, a staple in the corporate world, are an almost alien concept in education. There are no stock deals, no tax write-offs, no golden parachutes upon departure or retirement, and few of the perquisites that leaders outside of education accept, even demand, routinely. In most settings, there is the psychologically discomfiting knowledge that the spread between the earnings of policy-makers and their staff deputies is often small—a situation that almost never exists in privatized America, where the boss earns multiples more than support staffers. Equally disheartening is the stinginess of the media and the larger public in their rare dispensations of praise. Sniping and harassment are the norm. History of a sort was made in 1981 when the Boston *Globe* editorialized that departing Massachusetts Commissioner of Education Gregory Anrig may have done more for the commonwealth's teachers and students than any predecessor since Horace Mann, and again, in 1987, when the school board of Prince George's County, Maryland, awarded its superintendent a renewal contract with a hefty raise a year before his existing pact was to expire. Similar instances are scarce.

The coin is two-sided, though. Confident and secure on home ground, some educational leaders wilt under criticism from outside. Many resort to a seemingly permanent defensive stance. They resent what they consider to be the excessive interference of underqualified gadflies, even when the

Confident and secure on home ground, some educational leaders wilt under criticism from outside.

outsiders are elected legislators, school board members, or deeply concerned parents. Although few publicly admit it, many bristle when reminded of the supposedly inferior quality of their graduate training in education. Worse still, those with academic specialties in educational administration, the profession they practice, confront a widespread belief that their professional preparation, whether obtained at Harvard or at Hartley Normal, gets no respect, that they have wasted their time in education's Disneyland. Valid or not, the impression of third-rate training persists, and many senior functionaries remain sensitive about it throughout their careers. The spinoffs from such portraits of inadequacy may be timid performance and a tendency to clam up in public. It is hardly complimentary to hear that the shaping of one's background and personality leaves much to be desired. Paradoxically, much of the criticism comes from persons who are themselves products of the same graduate departments of educational administration.

Even on their best days, many educational leaders are ill at ease with the communications media, sometimes for excellent reasons. They believe that the transient young reporters they face are either bored or looking for an exposé. They know that nothing in education, including the messages that test scores convey, is cut and dried, and that simple advocacy or partisanship on an issue can rapidly stimulate counter-productive counter-arguments. Moreover, a misquoted or misunderstood educator is unlikely to attract backing from media-sensitized school boards or publicity-hungry legislators. Except for the authors of letters to the editor, the public is disinclined to offer more than casual support for leaders who attract media attention by doing something stimulating or original. Untutored in public relations, educators are often unable to exploit the press or electronic media to promote a worthwhile story.

The current age of school reform has spawned a notably virulent form of leader-bashing.

The current age of school reform has spawned a notably virulent form of leader-bashing. While identifying themselves as true reform's true believers, or at least as its most accurate interpreters, education's right wing came to center stage in the 1980s after decades of impotence and frustration. Its spokespersons view school improvement as a death struggle between the malevolent agenda of the Radical Left (equity over excellence, uncontrolled innovation, Godlessness, emphasis on individual development, and federal programs) and the sturdy educational truths of Real Americans (a return to the classics, memorization, prayer in the schools, equal time for the teaching of "creation science," and the banishment of

sex education and other dangerous fads that threaten to corrupt the children and the larger society). The confrontation may have had limited validity a decade or more earlier, but by the 1980s education had long since left itself without a Left. The reactionary mood that swept over segments of American society in this decade may not have taken deep root, but it surely tilted much public discourse to the right of center even though, as poll after poll demonstrated, the issues of the Real Americans were of little interest to mainstream America. School people who had fought for change and equal access in the 1960s and 1970s were labeled misguided educationists or educationaloids, terms that conveyed a picture of nutty professors acting out their self-centered fantasies. In the view of the Real Americans, much of the nation's leadership in education had succumbed to badly flawed visions of schooling.

4 THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

In commitment and involvement, another hazy picture emerges. Some decision-makers, notably state legislators, release only a few hours of their monthly schedules to educational concerns, while others, unpaid and unrecognized in the main, ardently devote nearly all of their waking hours to them. Such apparent imbalances should be destabilizing, but not necessarily. Why, for example, should the opinion or vote of an overextended corporation executive or research scientist who does little homework and misses most school board or legislative committee meetings carry the same weight as that of an industrious, true-believing pro-school zealot? In the best of ideal systems, it shouldn't. In the tough world of the public schools, though, that executive or scientist may be able to look fluoroscopically at a thorny issue, blow its cobwebs away in 15 minutes, and place it in usable perspective. The naive vitality of the untutored (and perhaps less intelligent) true believer, on the other hand, may yield only the technobabble and platitudes that have long plagued the schools.

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In an information age in which, as Harlan Cleveland has observed, leaders supervise employees who may know more than they do,[1] we tend to assume that education's policy-shapers are, if nothing else, informed. We are awash in authoritative and attractively packaged information. Plutarch and Galileo might have been tempted to kill for access to the once-unimaginable range and sophisticated content of the material that most typical office functionaries or high school students routinely disdain or take for granted. But our selection of what we choose to call up is sometimes quixotic. We are basically awed by the intimidating volume of available data. The dictates of fixed, preformed ideologies also restrict balanced access, while many supposedly educated people choose to remain fastened to misconceptions that have perennially served them. There is too little time to wade through the geometrically expanding masses of available information. In far more cases than we care to acknowledge, too, laziness and technical ineptitude keep us from selecting the right stuff. Without access to it, knowledge and wisdom

Richard R. Green: From Minneapple to Big Apple

When Dr. Richard R. Green, Chancellor of New York City's schools since March 1, 1988, met the press at his baptismal news conference at City Hall, he turned to Mayor Edward Koch, the most powerful figure in American urban government, and quietly said: "Why don't you be seated." The flamboyant mayor sat. A new era in the politics of education may have begun.

The search for a new boss for the nation's largest and messiest school system was a harrowing ordeal. It was front-page news in the city's newspapers, the lead item in television and radio news, and the principal subject of public discourse in the Big Apple for several weeks. The dimensions and stakes of the job are staggering:

- An operating budget of $5.2 billion, larger than that of 90 percent of all U.S. corporations.
- A total enrollment of approximately 940,000 students, more than the populations of all but a half-dozen American cities.
- The most politicized and least workable school board in the nation.
- A payroll of nearly 175,000 persons—62,000 solidly unionized teachers and over 110,000 bureaucrats.
- A decentralized system of 32 separate, mostly poorly administered, fiefdoms.
- A decaying, 1,000-building plant controlled by the tightly unionized custodians and largely ignored for a half-century.
- A racially skewed, outdated, and inefficient personnel system.
- A student population with 40 percent of the children living below the poverty line and an average annual dropout rate above 30 percent.
- An extraordinary, underreported level of violence, disruption, and anarchy in the high schools.
- Perhaps the highest volume of free advice available to any superintendent in the country.

New York City is new to Richard Green and he to it. But he is tough, street smart, and a tenacious educator. Raised without a father in a public housing project on the poor north side of Minneapolis, he spent time in a reform school, attended a vocational high school—and earned a Harvard

doctorate while working as an assistant principal. With a wife and four children, he had no loose change about for a siege at one of the costliest universities in the country. Brimming with an impatient self-confidence that sometimes borders on arrogance, he persuaded several Minneapolis business leaders to help pay his way. Eight years after completing his studies, Dr. Richard R. Green was superintendent of his city's schools. Gaining quick respect from his peers around the country, he was subsequently elected President of the Council of the Great City Schools.

The Green blueprint for the Minneapolis schools was an uncomplicated blend of consolidated authority, precise "benchmark" standards for testing students, and close ties with the city's corporate, media, and cultural circles. An accomplished salesman and political negotiator, Green solicited advice and financial support from business and community leaders as well as from resident and outside experts on schooling. Within 18 months as superintendent, he had gained approval for a five-year plan that centralized his power in what had been a three-district system with local autonomy comparable to that of New York City's 32 self-governing school districts. A thoroughly political person, according to his associates, Green was equally at home in the front offices of the corporations of which he was a board member and in the city's streets, where he challenged school-skippers to tell him what they were doing with their lives.

When Richard Green took office in New York, he went straight to the top in several ways. His $150,000 annual salary, augmented by $35,000 in allowances, was not only the highest of any school person in the country, but it topped that of every official in the nation's largest city, including a mayor known for his propensity for seizing center stage. The New York chancellorship epitomizes public life in the fastest lane in America. It has all but destroyed more than one of Green's richly qualified predecessors. Everyone gets deeply into the Chancellor's business: the Governor (also no shrinking violet), the Mayor, an often hostile state legislature, a badly fractured Board of Education, the powerful Municipal Assistance Corporation, a business community of surpassing influence, and high-circulation newspapers that cover all the news that is and isn't fit to print. The *Washington Post*, with no axe to grind, labeled New York's school system "an intractable mess." The mandate to Richard Green may prove to be the most difficult in recent educational history.

are bound to lose to demagoguery or narrow interests.

In their defense, nothing comes easy for the people who make and influence educational policy. That many, possibly most, are derelict in tapping the vast caches of material that would help improve their performance may appear unforgivable. But it is also understandable. Much information is assembled and presented in a style that induces stupefaction. Laced with jargon, poorly organized, and uncompromisingly dry, it may be all but impenetrable and thus unusable. Moreover, literature on learning and schooling has a dialectical quality: For every strong proposition, there is a powerful counter-argument of seemingly equal weight. The curious or needy user is thus at loose ends, with little choice but to return to ground zero. Unlike research in medicine, the law, and most fields of science, educational research reinforces this image of a non-discipline without intellectual anchor and thus undeserving of respect. When the U.S. Department of Education distilled the supposed best of educational research and practice into a compilation for popular consumption in 1986, the resulting booklet, *What Works*,[2] received decidedly mixed reviews. Some analysts called it a useful, if simplistic, compilation, but most of the field's top brass regarded it as a hodge-podge of proverbs and platitudes without insight or distinction. (Some of its "findings": "Children improve their reading ability by reading a lot," "... home efforts can greatly improve student achievement," "... hard work and discipline ... yield positive results.") The chief of the Department's research arm in the second Reagan term freely conceded, indeed used every available opportunity to complain, that educational research was examining the wrong issues. One of his predecessors had urged the abolition of the federal office in charge of educational research.

Faced with mountains of data of uncertain value about the present and future, most leaders would naturally gravitate to the valid past, a useful practice that should be mandatory in any endeavor. Unless he owned the business, a chief executive officer of a major business firm who insisted on repeating costly mistakes would be sent packing (albeit with a year's lead time in which to wrap attractive personal benefits in a golden parachute.) No such prospect faces the failed educational leader. Blame and even its causes are too hard to fix. Yet a rich body of literature illuminates every possible achievement and shortfall of the first three and one-half centuries of schooling in America. By and large, today's educational leaders have not mastered it. With embarrassing

We are awash in authoritative and attractively packaged information.

frequency, freshly minted educational findings and fads turn out to be tired variations of earlier flops. The overwhelming bulk of the literature on the school improvement movement of the 1980s leapfrogs centuries of reform efforts as though they never existed. It suffices to wave at Sputnik, salute equal access, and let the first 350 years sink into oblivion.

This lack of respect for the pitfalls of history is pandemic in the policy-making leadership. Frequently unwilling to view schooling in larger perspective, even its most adventurous chiefs and gurus hold an essentially cramped view of it. For every Governor Bill Clinton (Arkansas) or Thomas Kean (New Jersey) who reads books on education—or on anything else—ten others get by on staff memoranda or hasty briefings on subjects of crucial importance to their states. Historian Barbara Tuchman's *The March of Folly* and Richard Neustadt's and Ernest May's *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History of Decision Making* document our national reluctance to respect history, even the very recent past, and our penchant for repeating, with alarming consistency, the mistakes of our predecessors.[3]

With a few notable exceptions, today's policy-makers are non- or sometimes even anti-intellectual, some quite vocally so. All but a very few speak only English—no concessions to newer Americans—although Spanish is not a difficult language to learn. Most are innocent of technical or scientific knowledge, even at the levels taught in their schools, and their intimate familiarity with professional sports dwarfs their understanding of the great ideas that presumably swirl about in their classrooms. Most of those who do harbor profound thoughts are careful not to let them escape. In this respect, at least, school people are like politicians. A former Chairman of the national Democratic Party, John Bailey of Connecticut, was a person of profound knowledge and culture, but only his family and a few friends knew about these qualities while he held his post. In the culture of politics, in the 1950s and 1960s as now, he might have been hooted out of office. Decision-making is not for pointy-heads.

With embarrassing frequency, freshly minted educational findings and fads turn out to be tired variations of earlier flops.

The decided majority of today's school leaders are, and doubtless perceive that they must remain, results-oriented pragmatists who deal with here-and-now crises. Smart rather than cerebral, doers rather than thinkers, they meet deadlines and extinguish brush fires. When they look ahead, it is to next year's budget and student population. Rarely do they enjoy the luxury of examining overarching concepts of what constitutes the educated person. Understandably, they worry about teachers' salaries, decaying school buildings, student behavior,

and money. When their attention turns to academic achievement, they fret about performances on tests that may be irrelevant to their students and may, in any case, have outlived their questionable usefulness, but which they may be powerless to scrap. Although factual supporting evidence is lacking, it is not unreasonable to suspect that many legislators and board members would not score appreciably higher on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) than do the young people whose educational destinies are in their hands.

The real brains, the serious minds, in education are for the most part in the colleges and universities. Unfortunately, the most persistent biographer of higher education's most respected leaders would fail to find examples of their sustained participation in debates on elementary and secondary schooling. Ernest Boyer and John Goodlad, two of education's most respected public figures, have repeatedly called for closer ties between schools and universities, and small numbers of concerned higher education leaders have formed *ad hoc* groups to back school improvement. But of post-secondary education's major figures, only a handful, exemplified by Chancellor Donna Shalala of the University of Wisconsin, have committed themselves to helping the schools. Although heavy verbiage issues from the schools and colleges of education, they simply lack credibility in public policy circles, and their exhortations carry little weight.

With a few notable exceptions, today's policy-makers are non- or sometimes even anti-intellectual, some quite vocally so.

As if they were not already under siege for their understandable shortcomings as visionary intellectual virtuosos, today's educational leaders are under indictment for yet another, even graver, dereliction. They stand accused of undervaluing the fundamental content of good schooling—the classics, humanities, and foreign languages that were the staples of a proper 19th century education. Worse still, they have willingly turned the asylum over to its inmates by giving parents, educators, and even children a voice in determining what students learn. They have even begun to look at the economy that must absorb education's products. This matter of "cultural literacy," an ambiguous term with only tenuous ties to present social realities and a growing reputation as a form of adult trivial pursuit, may carry reactionary potential—the ultimate capacity to bend schools at least part way back to earlier times. Or it may prove to be a fad that education's governing elites can shed like last year's snakeskin.

The quarterback in professional football may sense instinctively what leadership and authority in education are about. On the field, he is the undisputed boss (principal or superintendent) who leads the team in direct pursuit of a

single objective: to gain enough points to win. But his direction is operational and far less likely to be strategic. An unusually gifted veteran quarterback may get into the tactical decision flow, but this is increasingly rare. The options during the game are few. A legion of coaches (school board) on the sidelines decides on the strategy and the plays the quarterback-leader will try to execute, while their bosses, the club owners (legislators, governors, some publicists), control the landscape of the larger enterprise. It does not matter whether these ultimate chiefs are virtuosos or conniving bamboozlers. They are in charge. They make the decisions that count.

Having made their decisions, most policy-level leaders follow through with diligence, integrity, and, customarily, with a strong professional investment. Customarily rather than invariably, though, because it is not always easy to gauge the extent and depth of this commitment or of their personal investment. Based on countless conversations, extensive observation, and the public record, the inescapable conclusion is that educational leaders dedicate themselves to their work as single-mindedly as any group in American public life. Stable personal lives and the 40-hour week are casualties of this devotion; chief state school officers and school superintendents, in particular, often give 80-90 hours weekly, while the lives of state and local school board members, nearly all of them unsalaried, can become nightmares of clashing priorities and physical and emotional strain. Job-related depression, stomach ulcers, and lower back problems are on the rise among the occupants of education's board rooms. The excessive demands of work probably led to the suicide of the superintendent of a major urban school system in Ohio.

[today's educational leaders] stand accused of undervaluing the fundamental context of good schooling—the classics, humanities, and foreign languages.

School leaders usually stand up well to the severe and unsettling pressures that arise from their work. It is no small achievement to juggle budgetary priorities, competing agendas of interest groups, hit-and-run attacks by print and electronic media, and demands for quick-fix action on drugs, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, alcoholism, and unresponsive or misdirected curricula. By the time most leaders have attained policy-level rank, they are thick-skinned, tenured, or contract-holding senior functionaries capable of responding with equanimity to mystical twists and turns of political or educational fortune. Nothing is new to them, including the grotesque messages of fringe or extremist groups that are bent on forcing outrageous programs and principles on the schools. For their part, elected officials may pay more heed to public

opinion, but they, too, enjoy job security for finite periods of time. It is almost unthinkable for legislators, board members, or governors to leave office before their terms expire. Contrast this with the uncertainties of life in corporate America.

Fortified by secure jobs . . . decision-makers can approach change in a measured, sometimes even confident manner.

This stability is a positive force in educational policy-making. Fortified by secure jobs or the confidence of the voters who chose them, decision-makers can approach change in a measured, sometimes even confident manner. There generally is time to create coalitions, to negotiate, to consider alternatives. But there is also time, and some inclination, to lapse into complacent self-satisfaction.

Herein stands a potential barrier to the kind of motivated, risk-taking leadership that today's schools need. It would take an extraordinarily diligent researcher to locate a dozen verifiable cases of top public school educators who have voluntarily left their jobs over matters of conscience or principle. Even in the late 1960s, when many urban school systems appeared to have taken leave of their educational senses on issues of curriculum and governance, few educators uttered the latter-day version of James Joyce's classic, "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe." Today's sturdy back-to-basics advocates were yesterday's adventurers. But recent memory yields a respectable number of issue-triggered departures in other fields. In foreign policy alone, for example, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance left his post in 1980 over the issue of rescuing hostages from Iran, Assistant Secretary Bernard Kalb resigned in 1986 when he felt deceived by his superiors, and a corps of younger diplomats resigned in 1971 over the U.S. actions in Cambodia. Nor have education's ranks contained many whistle-blowers. The principal responses to inefficiency, inadequacy and corruption—for reform, in other words—have come from beyond the schoolyard fence, not from conscience-stricken insiders. When under attack, school people seldom fight back. They accommodate.

5 GURUS AND GATEKEEPERS

The sources and forms of educational leadership are wildly inconsistent. In a citizen-driven enterprise like the public schools, no statutory assignment of responsibility can determine exactly who will do the real leading and how. The endeavor is too complex at the same time that it is too widely dispersed. It is unevenly layered, and it is viewed through too many prisms. At times it seems almost too human. But in one crucially important detail at least, it is thoroughly predictable: Nearly all decision-makers lean heavily on the wisdom and skills of experts and advisors who are largely unknown even to the most witting publics. These are education's "significant others," and they cut a surprisingly wide swath. Their approximate opposite numbers in politics often constitute a shadow government, not of outsiders as in Britain's shadow cabinets but as powerful, in-place wielders of real power. As life becomes more complicated, there are signs that this is also happening in large salients of American public education.

. . . no statutory assignment of responsibility can determine who will do the real leading and how.

Whether guru, gatekeeper, or well-positioned staff member, these unacknowledged behind-the-scenes figures merit attention. They are patently not servile flatterers or spear-carriers. They are the ones who demystify complexity and define issues. They write the speeches and position papers, often with vague or no instructions. They conduct and usually prevail in the internecine battles that precede approval by the titular boss. They have the chief's ear and often decide who else will have it. Their spin on an issue frequently decides how it will play as policy. The more gifted and trusted—or audacious—among them set their leaders' agendas. (Old Washington aphorism: "He who drafts the agenda controls the program.")

A few of these unclassifiable power-bearers actually come to believe that they *are* the bosses, and they consciously mimic their employers. A key U.S. Senate committee staff member of the 1970s who frequently demanded the deference due his elected boss was sacked for going too far. He had persuaded himself of his indispensability and infallibility. Beset by excessive demands on his attention, his chairman, a veteran powerhouse in the Senate, had allowed much of his

nominal authority to pass to this non-elected staff subordinate. That the staffer did his job responsibly and respectfully was immaterial; he was caught crossing the line between advisor and leader in acting on a relatively minor matter without the Senator's express authorization. He became history.

The subject is delicate and has remained largely unexplored. Only the most secure, self-confident Presidential candidate, governor, or legislative committee chairperson is likely to discourse publicly on the pivotal contribution of a staff member or influential friend in creating a policy position or stacking the odds on a major decision. Nor are these senior numbers-crunchers and boiler-room operators themselves disposed to seek public credit. (Second old Washington or state capital adage: "Budget is policy.") When former top White House officials from a half-dozen presidencies met in 1986 to share experiences and wisdom, they voiced scarcely a hint that their bosses had been anything less than omniscient leaders with an instinctive capacity to make all of the correct, patriotic decisions. If these senior aides are to be believed, our post-World War II Presidents have been driven by powerful conviction, enormous self-confidence, and a doubt-free faith in American pluralism. Contrary evidence laces the biographies of all of these pillars of our national verities, but little of it comes from the mouths and word processors of those who have been closest to them. Even former Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell, who endured almost daily humiliation from the Reagan White House for three of his four years in office, carefully avoids criticism of a President who (a) was intent on destroying Bell's Department, (b) was possibly the least informed chief executive in modern history, (c) greeted *A Nation at Risk*, Bell's *magnum opus*, with irrelevant Rightist homilies about school prayer and tuition tax credits, and (d) ignored education after the 1984 election.[1] And when John F. Kennedy's top aides convened in 1987 to reminisce about foreign policy, their issue of choice was the Cuban missile crisis, in which their boss performed superbly, and not the Bay of Pigs disaster, in which he did not. Leaders are human, too. And they have vulnerable egos.

***Old Washington aphorism:* "He who drafts the agenda controls the program."**

The status and quality of the key counselors vary widely. Most governors, for example, employ full-time salaried education aides who function independently of the state education agency, although some prefer direct contact with a strong chief state school officer. The near-miracle of school improvement in once-backward South Carolina in the mid-1980s was manifestly the crowning achievement of former

Governor Richard Riley, but observers familiar with events there, including Riley, credit education aide Terry Peterson with mobilizing and targeting the brain power and political savvy that made it happen. Richard Mills filled a roughly similar staff role in New Jersey for Thomas Kean, a stridently pro-education governor, before becoming chief state school officer in Vermont in 1988.

The education committees of state legislatures, which were one of the most powerful behind-the-scenes forces in the earlier phases of school reform, now routinely assign heavy responsibility to staffs that, in many states, did not exist or were insignificant a decade ago. The Pennsylvania legislature, for example, employed a permanent education staff of 14 persons in 1988, while the staffs in states such as New York and California, where the legislature is in session for much of the year, have become strong entities in their own right. No such staff resources ease the work burden of state boards of education. Most get by with whatever professional support and information they can obtain from state agencies with agendas that are not always in phase with theirs. Although state boards are a creditable force in creating and legitimating many policy actions, the reform caravan of the 1983-1985 period bypassed them, as well as most local school boards, and the majority of them remain secondary players. This sidelining was probably unconnected to the quantity and quality of their staff work, but it is worth conjecturing how state boards might have fared had small cadres of professional analysts been available to help spotlight the concerns of this often overlooked arm of state educational policy-making.

Second old Washington or state capital adage: "Budget is policy."

At the federal level, where the Executive Branch was markedly ideological in the 1980s, a battalion of conservative gurus and gatekeepers, insiders and consultants alike, provided enough intellectual ammunition to sate the appetite of the hungriest educational fundamentalist. In those years, however, the Department of Education made little policy and few decisions. Its abdication was intentional. The broad lines of the aggressively conservative federal stance on all educational issues had been fixed in the 1980 Presidential campaign, and the Department became a well-advertised podium from which to amplify and flesh them out. At the White House, where one staff functionary traditionally monitors education—recommending what the President should read and say, whom he should see, and how he should react when education reaches the docket—the powerful domestic affairs advisor in the Reagan Administration's home stretch, Gary Bauer, was a former Under Secretary of

Education and a staunch advocate of traditional educational and family values. Such less visible White House aides as Douglass Cater in the Lyndon Johnson years and Bertram Carp in the Carter Administration helped set the course of educational policy for Presidents who were strongly committed to a federal presence in the schools.

. . . in the 1980s . . . the [U.S.] Department of Education made little policy and few decisions.

With an activist Congress pointing the way, Washington's financial support of the schools has been a largely non-negotiable item, a five to ten percent factor, in American educational life for a quarter-century. Backing for most legislative initiatives has been bipartisan, with relatively few legislators of either chamber willingly opposing spending measures to implement them. But these are among the world's most thinly spread lawmakers. Flitting from issue to issue, constantly alert to shifting political moods back home, they rarely have time to develop expertise in more than one or two fields. For many understandable reasons—it is a state task, the schools get few exploitable headlines, the issues are not normally vote-getters—education usually is not one of them. The inevitable result is a heavy dependence on professional staff to obtain data, suggest positions, and help set overall agendas. In the House of Representatives, which attends to educational interests more diligently than does the Senate, senior aide John Jennings has unobtrusively helped the Members to coordinate their education interests since the late 1960s. A walking encyclopedia on federal legislation, Jennings has gained universal admiration for his effective performance.

6 LEADERSHIP BY COMMISSION

Educational reform has conferred new prestige on blue-ribbon advisory commissions. Our national predilection for them is understandable. Identifying prominent people in a celebrity-conscious society with a tough problem imparts credibility and gravity to it. The more effective commissions clarify issues that may have become mired in partisan squabbling. For elected policy-makers, whether rural county council member or President of the United States—Ronald Reagan found them especially useful in the early and mid-1980s—they can serve several additional functions, notably the expedient one of delaying unpopular action on thorny matters. Potentially unwinnable battles can be side-stepped gracefully while the leader gains time to shift his/her or the public's stance. For a leader sensing a difficult passage for a controversial policy, they may provide exactly the prestigious endorsement needed to push it over the top. Commissions also provide a vehicle for assigning blame for unpopular policies or, as former U.S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel notes, "for the moving of hot potatoes to other hands."[1] In the best of worlds, they may conceivably serve their ostensible purpose of mobilizing large and respected minds to suggest sensible actions for the greater good. At their worst, these *ad hoc* bodies are unlikely to harm a tactically sensitive leader. Findings and recommendations that run against the grain are easily buried or argued to death, rarely to reappear to anyone's embarrassment.

Commissions . . . provide a vehicle . . . for the moving of hot potatoes to other hands.

Commissions don't just happen. Usually, they constitute a temporary assignment or sharing of leadership, not simply a device for cadging expert wisdom at minimum cost. Recruiting for them can be a sophisticated art form. Should they represent the interests and issues the commission is to debate, or is it preferable to solicit the uncluttered intelligence of disinterested people of stature from other fields? Or does a mixture of the two make better sense and policy? And what about philosophical orientation in a time of shifting priorities?

There are no ready answers, only cases. To take an obvious one, the National Commission on Social Security provides a superb example of a body that blended eminent specialists,

legislative leaders, and nationally recognized giants of business, labor, and public life into one of the most effective teams of its type in recent memory. Its findings had heft and credibility, and they were adopted—to the relief of a nation that had come to doubt the soundness of its bedrock social insurance system. Very shortly thereafter, though, the sorry performance of a national commission on pornography whose members had clearly prejudged the issues cast doubt on the leadership role of such groups in potentially delicate matters. And it was not until a no-nonsense former Chief of Naval Operations assumed the chair that another Presidential commission, appointed to examine federal responses to a far more ominous threat, shook down, shaped up, and proposed goals and policies for a coordinated national campaign to get at the plague of AIDS. The record is thus mixed. It is as easy to muff the opportunities a commission presents as it is to put them to good use.

Education's commissions on reform have been many, prolific, and indisputably vital to political decision-makers at all levels of hierarchy and jurisdiction. A distinguished Columbia University professor and expert on educational policy was presumably sure of his ground when he wrote in mid-1984, "The publication last March of 'Horace's Compromise: The Decline of the American High School' marked the end of a spate of reports urging educational reform that began in November 1982 with 'The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto.' "[2] He missed by at least four years; the reports kept coming, and most have demanded close scrutiny. Since the mid-1980s commission reports have been a nearly sovereign power in educational policy. Some have demanded executive or legislative action—or else, while the legacy of others has been confusion and unrealistic expectations. Their tens of thousands of pages add up to an unparalleled inventory of the supposed ills of the schools—possibly ten parts analysis and diagnosis to one part prescription.

Since the mid-1980s commission reports have been a nearly sovereign power in educational policy.

Out of this nationwide welter of reform commission reports, four, three of them issued since 1985, stand out as paradigms of the genre, although a dozen more—some the products of commissions and others, such as John Goodlad's *A Place Called School* and Ernest Boyer's *High School*, the work of gifted individuals supported by research teams—have also significantly influenced decision-makers. Each of the four has contributed a unique dimension to the job of school leadership in the 1990s because of the constituency it represents and the currency of the topics in which it trades.

Revolutionary educational doctrine is noticeably absent; there is no pedagogy of the oppressed, no deschooling of America, no hint of the ecstasy of education. Even the most pointed appeals in the reports for "restructuring" the schools fall within the safe perimeters of existing modes of political leadership and widely-accepted pieties about curricular content. And they posed no threat to the moral belief systems of the leaders and legislative bodies that spawned them.

As dozens of prestigious commissions dropped their reports in the in-boxes of education's authority figures, Ernest Boyer mimicked the vivid language of *A Nation at Risk* to note that "a rising tide of reports on educational reform is threatening to engulf us." This semi-jesting observation fell slightly wide of the mark, for most of these documents also enlightened and shocked us, none more devastatingly than *A Nation at Risk*. The timing in 1983 was just right for this federally-sponsored call for excellence, and its unflattering portrayal of American education's deficiencies elicited an instantaneous national reaction. That it overstated the shortcomings of the schools while slighting equity and the nation's growing underclass was unfortunate but probably not crucial at the moment. Its doomsday message, conveyed in 36 pages of abundantly readable if somewhat apocalyptic language that reached millions of Americans, reinforced growing suspicions that the schools were in deep trouble—and that was its purpose. More catalyst than blueprint, *A Nation at Risk* was the galvanizing force in the school improvement movement of the 1980s. Even though test scores had stopped declining several years earlier, and state legislatures were already at their drafting tables, this landmark appeal for action stands as the symbol of the reform movement, indeed, as its primary source of leadership.

A Nation at Risk unleashed a profusion of national manifestos and state legislative debates. No educational interest group was safe as the reform movement went into orbit in nearly every state in the union. Whether by design or coincidence, *A Nation at Risk* appeared at almost the precise historical moment at which the federal government had abandoned most of its directly targeted commitments to local school districts. Although the report had urged a continuing role for Washington, the U.S. Government was no longer a serious player. Influence and authority rested firmly in the hands of the education professions, elected state and local politicians, sub-federal bureaucracies, and, as the decade wound down, the perceived interests of American business. The commission reports from these groups round out the gang of four.

A Nation At Risk *was the galvanizing force in the school improvement movement of the 1980s.*

Marc S. Tucker: "Perestroika" in the Schools

The *Magna Carta* of school reform in America may prove to be *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*. Described as historic, unprecedented, and compelling when it rocketed onto the national scene in May 1986, this blunt but persuasive report of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession calls for a fundamental and revolutionary restructuring of teaching and schooling. Its goal, according to principal author Marc S. Tucker, was not to produce a pretentious catalogue of programs and recommendations to repair a faltering system but rather to help prepare the nation to cope effectively with a swiftly changing global economy. The thoughtful analysis of *A Nation Prepared*, buttressed by the moral authority and public position of the members of the Task Force, virtually guarantees that it will decisively affect American education well into the 21st century. Like Mikhail Gorbachev's restructuring ("perestroika") of the Soviet economy, *A Nation Prepared* could change the way a nation looks at its schools. It is a classic of its genre.

As Executive Director of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, a program of the respected Carnegie Corporation of New York, Marc Tucker was the guiding force behind what he has termed a "staff-driven enterprise." Unlike the overwhelming bulk of reform-oriented commissions and task forces, which are charged by an agency with performing precisely defined tasks, the Carnegie Task Force began with its own overarching premise: that the structure of schools and schooling needed far-reaching changes. The question then became: Did this premise justify creating a national body?

In 1984 Tucker took to the friendly skies to find out. He listened to 30 leaders of business, communications, and education. From them he learned that business executives viewed education's problems solely in terms of the economy's formidable challenges, while educators, still smarting from the criticism leveled in the commission reports of the previous two years, would not concede that the schools were collapsing, especially when current performance was measured against that of earlier eras. But all agreed that basic shifts were overdue, especially in the teaching profession. Out of this broad consensus, supported by Tucker's strong personal conviction that it was accurate, came a task force that would produce the reform movement's toughest prescriptions for achievable change.

An active, prodigiously informed former head of policy research at the National Institute of Education, Marc Tucker was no wallflower at the year-long ball of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. His was

the major voice in choosing the richly qualified 14-member group that included both a sitting and a former governor, the heads of the national teacher organizations (Albert Shanker of the AFT was a powerhouse of the Task Force's work), a former cabinet member, state-level officials, and corporate executives. Service on the Task Force was to be no mere item for their already bulging resumes. Tucker and his deputy worked one-on-one with Task Force members to learn how they saw the main issues. The group met six times to review and comment on what Tucker had produced between sessions. One member told *Education Week*, "There was not much forgiveness for not-well-thought-through comments." But Tucker consistently demanded written reactions on tight deadlines and declined to put specific issues to votes, an almost unheard-of violation of normal commission practice. This mode of operation could not have been easy for such overworked individuals as the chief scientist of the International Business Machines Corporation, the Governor of New Jersey, and the President of the National Education Association. It worked, and they lived with it.

Predictions that *A Nation Prepared* could become education's equivalent of the Flexner report of 1910 that revolutionized medical education may not be far off the mark. The Task Force's findings were anything but hot air; Tucker extracted guarantees of financial support to carry out its key recommendations, and the process began almost immediately after publication. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards it proposed is in place. "Carnegie schools" or their reasonable facsimiles have started to appear. Throughout the country, governors, state legislators, and state education agencies were using *A Nation Prepared* as the basis of a fundamental reexamination of policies on schooling.

In concept and performance, Marc Tucker destroyed the seemingly unbreakable mold in which commissions (or task forces) and their executive directors have traditionally cast themselves. He was no faceless, nameless functionary. The conceptual strategy was basically his. He drafted the report and readily shares both the praise and criticism it has received. And he has no intention of abandoning the themes it pursued. In 1988 he assumed new but closely related responsibilities as President of the Rochester, New York-based National Center on Education and the Economy, a Tucker-conceived body that examines "human resource policy development at both the national level and on behalf of New York State" and assists the Rochester City School District to carry out one of the most innovative programs to redesign an entire urban school system that has ever been attempted.

For reasons that require no elaboration, the centerpiece of school improvement must be the teaching profession. According to Fred M. Hechinger of *The New York Times*, "Past efforts have failed largely because they ignored the crucial role of the teachers." He could have added that teacher-bashing had been one of the central features of the early literature and media coverage of reform. In varying degrees much of America's classroom teaching force—education's future managers—came across, mostly unjustly, as academically deficient, technically incompetent, and dominated by selfish union interests. By contrast, not a word of direct criticism of the nation's teaching force finds its way into *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, the May 1986 report of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession.[3] The message is nevertheless clear: Sweeping changes—in patterns of school governance, in the calibre and preparation of recruits to teaching, and in the sensitive processes of certification—must occur if the schools are to respond to the demands of a changing world economy. (This focus on economic forces riles some distinguished educators, among them Harold Howe II, a former U.S. Commissioner of Education, who concurred with most of *A Nation Prepared* but asserted that "there are as many threats to democratic government and good citizenship as there are to our capacity to compete economically.")[4]

The group that prepared* A Nation Prepared *. . . is a near-exemplar of the modern blue-ribbon commission . . . as a leadership force in education.

The group that produced *A Nation Prepared*, the second of the high-impact commission reports, is a near-exemplar of the modern blue-ribbon commission—or, to use its term, task force—as a leadership force in education. It represents collective leadership at its most practical and intellectual, even though some of its findings and assumptions initially alienated important sectors of the professional education community, notably principals and some state officials. Exploiting a national consensus that the teaching profession required a systematic revamping, a representative group of 14 concerned leaders simply made a tough case brilliantly and compellingly. Unlike *A Nation at Risk*, which was its almost necessary precursor, the Carnegie report provided both a specific commitment to further action and the promise of resources sufficient to give substance to its main agenda item, the creation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Astonishingly in the exhortatory but often impractical world of commissions and task forces, a preliminary version of the Board was in place within a year of the issuance of *A Nation Prepared*. Even more surprisingly, the action-oriented Board planned to defer doing serious

business until a Carnegie-funded research group could provide authoritative research backing for its work. This is mature leadership.

By the mid-eighties, the dominant role of the states in policy, governance, and finance was an accepted fact in educational life. Visible, well-trumpeted examples were beginning to dot the continental map, especially south of the Mason-Dixon line. For the first time, individual political leaders—Hunt of North Carolina, Winter of Mississippi, Alexander of Tennessee, Kean of New Jersey, Riley of South Carolina, Clinton of Arkansas, Robb of Virginia, White of Texas—were gaining renown as education governors. It was time to go national, and in August 1985 they did exactly that under the aegis of their umbrella organization, the National Governors' Association. With Alexander then heading the NGA, and Clinton and Kean as "Initiative Co-Chairmen," the governors organized themselves into seven task forces, combed the country for data and expertise, and issued a profoundly important seven-part report, *Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education*, in August 1986.[5] It left not a whit of doubt that the governors had legitimated their primacy in educational policy. All 50 participated, most with visible enthusiasm. As Alexander wrote, "No one else can set the agenda in a state the way the governor can. The governor's agenda becomes the state's agenda and the state's agenda is the nation's agenda, especially in education, which is the responsibility of the states."

Time for Results *. . . left not a whit of doubt that the governors had legitimated their primacy in educational policy.*

Media coverage of *Time for Results* understandably spotlighted the governors' readiness to "establish a mechanism for state intervention into school districts where no progress is being made with lower-achieving students"—a stunning statement of ultimate state authority. But on topic after topic throughout the report, the governors avoided the generalities and alarmism of *A Nation at Risk*. Instead, *Time for Results* flowed from Alexander's proposition that "better schools mean better jobs" and pursued such here-and-now issues as the needs of the teaching profession, parental involvement, early education, technology, school leadership (inexplicably neglected almost everywhere else in the ever-rising tide of reform reports), and school facilities (also absent from other literature on school improvement.) And unlike commission reports that fire a single blast and fail to survey the impact, *Time for Results* established procedures for monitoring results for five years—or long after most of the governors of the 1985-86 era would have left office.

The fourth of the key commission reports is the most

unlikely and unexpected: a reasoned plea by a prestigious panel in September 1987 that, whatever the cost, the reform movement reach the nation's children at risk. Wasting few words, *Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged*[6] implicitly dismissed the covey of high school-oriented commission reports that preceded it with imposing evidence that, as Albert Shanker put it, "A child's education success or failure has a lot to do with what happens to him in his crucial earliest years before he even sets foot in a classroom."

The finding may not be revolutionary, but the authorship of *Children in Need* surely is, at the least, unconventional. It is from this authorship, a subcommittee of the powerful business-led Committee for Economic Development (CED), that the impact and credibility of the report flow. Described as a think tank in which executives at the top of the nation's most influential corporations do the thinking, CED historically has studied matters affecting the economic health of the nation and therefore of major business interests. Its entry into The Great School Debate was a linear extension of these concerns.

The path to *Children in Need* began with a 1983 CED study on U.S. productivity and our worldwide competitive position that showed that the real key to productivity was people, not tools. It was a short step to a full-blown examination of U.S. public education as a factor in economic success. The product of this inquiry, a 1985 report called *Investing in Our Children: Business and the Schools*,[7] was a fairly conventional all-purpose addition to the burgeoning bibliography on reform, but it sparked special interest in the early childhood years, especially in economically depressed areas. Research for *Investing in Our Children* had led CED's business leaders to urge support for at least a year of high-quality, expensive preschool for disadvantaged children beginning at the age of three. Early schooling, they became convinced, so improved children's self-confidence and sense of control that they simply performed better on every front in their adolescent years. In the cold language of cost effectiveness, CED calculated that a dollar's investment in preschool education "returns $4.75 because of lower costs of special education, public assistance, and crime."

Children in Need refined and fleshed out this central finding. An extraordinarily honest and courageous document, it places important, traditionally skeptical business leaders on record for such once-unthinkable services as pre- and postnatal care for pregnant teenagers and other high-risk

Children in Need ***places important, traditionally skeptical business leaders on record for once-unthinkable [school and child care] services.***

mothers, parenting education, high-quality child care arrangements for poor working parents "that stress social development and school readiness," and, crucial to the entire CED package, "quality preschool programs for all disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds."

This used to be alien terrain for big business. But CED's involvement is a commitment, not a passing fancy. The subcommittee chair, former Proctor and Gamble chief Owen Butler, has testified before Congress on the case for early intervention, and some of his colleagues, notably William Woodside, former CEO of the Primerica Corporation, have actively sought increased federal funding for remedial education. They are not alone. The leadership of many of the nation's largest firms is unshakeably convinced of the correctness of the main messages of reform. David Kearns of Xerox has prepared a detailed blueprint for it. In this important sense, *Children in Need* and its predecessor, *Investing in Our Children*, symbolize an evolving shift in the concern of business over education. No longer will it suffice to sponsor "adopt a school" programs or to equip a few school computer centers; for better or worse, big American business intends to speak out on educational issues.

7 THE TRAINING JUMBLE

The people atop education's policy ladder are assertive, confident public figures. They can live with large concepts, large numbers, and large institutions. Their rarely expressed uncertainties stem from correctable gaps in knowledge or from unanticipated political pressures, seldom from self-doubt about their legitimacy as leaders. The fact that the voters chose them, or that senior elected officials appointed them after tough-minded search committees had screened them, or that they survived a difficult hierarchical passage doubtless enhances their already healthy self-esteem. They are emphatically not the 97-pound weaklings of education.

For such people who have arrived, the matter of continuing training to improve performance would appear to be a marginal concern. They occupy their top-level posts because of the quality of their judgment and professional tools. Yet most of today's leaders concede that they are not always omniscient and proficient. No one, they admit, can sort out, let alone master, all of the new data, techniques, and societal forces, some of enormous complexity and potential, that are altering public education. The swift expansion of knowledge in the 1980s has rendered long-held principles vulnerable, even obsolete—and the end is nowhere in view. Political and jurisdictional shifts, the changing contours of the economy, and continuing upheavals in demography and family living patterns all impose once-unimaginable levies on the schools.

. . . school systems remain notoriously stingy with time and support for training those already in the classroom and in front offices.

It used to suffice for a board member or legislator to keep current through institutes for newcomers, orientation sessions, and workshops at regional or national conventions. Or they depended on updates from experts back home and periodic reports from national associations. Conversations with colleagues on the firing line in the schools often helped. For full-time policy-oriented professionals, mainly district or urban superintendents and senior state officials, there was usually more; they are the targeted market for much of the new information, and, whether absorbed or not, it is theirs for the asking. Too, they are at the front where new weaponry and tactics are baptized. But there is some doubt that many have the time or inclination to understand their true worth and implications.

It is axiomatic throughout education that its purpose is to prepare and orient the students, not the teachers and their bosses. They are supposed to know what they are about and thus require little more than fine tuning. While reformers talk bravely about overhauling the teaching profession, school systems remain notoriously stingy with time and support for training those already in the classroom and in front offices. In an era when the non-public sector busily and expensively retrains both its white- and blue-collar workers, the schools begrudgingly dole out less than one percent of their annual budgets for enhancing the professional repertoires of their two million-plus front-line classroom and managerial staff members. And the situation for their nominal chiefs, the decision- and policy-makers, is far worse. Even in the late 1960s and 1970s, when federal education dollars for the most esoteric, some would say useless, purposes gushed from Washington's spigot, the section of the Higher Education Act of 1965 that authorized funding to improve the skills of teachers, specialists, and supervisors had few political backers. In the world of federal grants programs, which were almost never permitted to run out in those days, the Education Professions Development Act (EPDA) of 1967 actually expired—not just the money as a consequence of understandable budget squeezes, but the authority to consider granting funds!—years before the cost-cutting Reagan Administration arrived in Washington. The EPDA didn't even go out with a whimper; except for a small coterie of self-interested project managers, no one in America, including the education lobbies, seemed to care. Two U.S. Senate committee staffers simply decided that the EPDA programs were non-productive boondoggles that deserved extinction. So much for federal involvement in helping those at the top or middle levels of education's totem pole.

. . . considerable evidence demonstrates that [the Education Professions Development Act] produced or spurred the careers of some first-class leaders of today.

But the evidence of fat-catting was too thin. EPDA deserved better. In 1988, a dozen years after the demise of the EPDA training programs and nearly a decade since the end of the 17-year run of the feisty Teacher Corps, which tried to train everyone in sight from classroom aides and low-income parents to chief state school officers and state legislators, considerable evidence demonstrates that they produced or spurred the careers of some first-class leaders of today. The professional odysseys of some of our best legislators, state education officials, college presidents and deans, school district superintendents, and an ever-growing cadre of energetic and ambitious principals might never have begun, let alone prospered, without these imaginatively designed

programs. Reliable statistics are scarce, and the subject has questionable appeal for scholars or journalists. But proof is abundant, especially where black and Hispanic leaders are finally attaining positions of influence in the late 1980s. Priming them with financial support was a central theme of EPDA and of other federally-backed efforts of the 1960s and most of the 1970s, and it has been paying dividends throughout the 1980s. Without the thousands of products of these admittedly imperfect programs, the majority minority gap in educational leadership that persists in the late 1980s would be appreciably wider than it is. An informal survey in 1987 disclosed that the norm for Teacher Corps interns of the mid- and late 1970s, most of them black or Hispanic, had become an urban principalship and that a significant percentage of those of the previous decade had moved into policy-level status in state agencies and urban school systems. They had paid their dues as teachers for from six to ten years, although a few, like California's gifted Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bill Honig, an intern of the early 1970s in San Francisco, only spent a year or two in the classroom.

. . . dollars for preparing education's future high brass are in short supply, particularly in state and local budgets.

Leadership has become a catchword, but it is not yet a fad. Lamentably, catchwords seldom stimulate financial support; fads get dollars, if only for a short time. And dollars for preparing education's future high brass are in short supply, particularly in state and local budgets. When support does materialize, often as in-kind in-service days, it invariably represents a low priority in the spending package and is among the first items to be shed in negotiations. Sometimes this item is inserted into budgets for exactly that purpose—as a potential early cull. It lacks glamour, and only the best-paid employees in the system bother to fight, usually desultorily, for it. Foundations have helped, but their support leveled off in the 1970s, and corporations have only occasionally underwritten leadership development for education.

If state and local monies are not available, and external sources are undependable, then where is the financial backing for systematic, reasonably comprehensive leadership training for education's leaders? For advocates of an informed decision-making corps, the answer is grim: nowhere, at least not in respectable amounts from any easily identifiable source. In nearly all other fields, the question would have little reality. The profit-making business sector automatically takes care of the staff development needs of its own at all levels of the organization, while self-employed professionals routinely write training off as a legitimate business outlay (after 40 years in the profession, the writer's dentist still devotes two

days monthly to advanced training.) For reasons that demand respect, relatively few educational policy-makers would go far out of pocket for this purpose. As salaried government workers or elected officials, they are comfortable in the belief that their interests are the community's. If the community they serve fails to provide or underwrite a service, then that service, however vital it may appear to be, must go by the board. It should suffice that these officials and senior functionaries give countless unpaid night and weekend hours to their work, that many neglect their families and personal lives, and that, as primary providers of one of society's basic needs, they are expected to work for fewer and smaller rewards than other comparable members of that society.

8 The Teaching Imperative

Where are the people who can make good things happen in the schools? How can they be spotted, recruited, and nurtured? Will public service in general and education in particular ever be able to compete for the nation's top talent? And once in the loop, will the best remain and grow?

If the nearly complete record of the 1980s yields usable clues, and the observations of some of education's leading pundits and publicists merit any respect, then the larger prospect borders on dismal. According to the well-publicized 22nd annual survey of incoming college freshmen conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Higher Education Research Institute of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), over 70 percent of 1987's entering first-year students believed that "a key reason to attend college was 'to make money,' " and only 39 percent professed serious interested in developing "a meaningful philosophy of life."[1] These assertions by an extraordinarily large and broadly-based sample (209,627 students at 390 two- and four-year institutions) contrasted vividly with the returns from identical questions from earlier years. In 1966, for example, 83 percent deemed it an "essential or very important" goal to have a life's philosophy, while in 1970 "being well off financially" was a key goal of only 39 percent. In other words, a nearly total flip-flop. Whatever other trends or characteristics these data demonstrate, they do not herald the guaranteed arrival in the job markets of the early 1990s of a sizeable cadre of high-caliber, human service-oriented young people.

Bluntly stated, public service went out of fashion in the 1980s as a serious career option for most of the nation's best and brightest. In one recruiting season in the mid-1980s, to recycle a well-known example, half of the graduating class at Yale University applied for employment as investment bankers with one New York firm reputed to offer its new professionals superb opportunities to strike it rich while still very young. Mulling over the ACE-UCLA findings, syndicated columnist Haynes Johnson asked, "Who is going to tend to the nation's business, and how will that business be done?" if "what matters most to the great majority is not public business but

Bluntly stated, public service went out of fashion in the 1980s as a serious career option for most of the nation's best and brightest.

Mary Hatwood Futrell: Moving the Pushmi-Pullyu Machine

The National Education Association's numbers are staggering: 1.86 million members, of whom 1.5 million are teachers and 85,000 are elected building representatives. The Association has 40,000 committees and governing boards, 8,000 plus delegates at its national convention, more than 4,000 members (also known as voters with families) per U.S. Congressional district, and an annual national budget of $118 million. It is the largest and strongest labor union in the country; along with its 52 affiliates, the NEA spends more than $400 million a year and employs 3,500 people. Founded before the Civil War, it is a fundamental force in American life.

The NEA constituency thinks liberally and acts conservatively. Sometimes it moves like a herd of exhausted elephants. But when its ponderous, thickly layered democratic gears finally mesh to advance an issue, the results can be awesome, for the name of the NEA game is power. Never was this more clearly illustrated than in 1979 when the Carter Administration called every political chit it could muster to persuade the Congress to create the U.S. Department of Education that candidate Carter had promised the NEA in the 1976 election. A dozen years later, the stakes are even higher. How the NEA elects to play the transcendent issues of school improvement and the professionalization of teaching will importantly affect the nation's educational future.

At the helm of the NEA since 1983 stands three-term President Mary Hatwood Futrell, by all odds the best-known, most experienced, and most future-oriented leader in recent NEA history. A veteran activist of the NEA wars in Virginia, Futrell has been a fixture on the national NEA scene since leaving her post as a business teacher in Alexandria in 1978 to become the full-time elected NEA secretary-treasurer. Let there be no doubt about Ms. Futrell: Like the organization she heads, she personifies clout and commitment and does not hesitate to use them, deftly and tellingly, on behalf of her organization's members and policies. She repeatedly lashed out at the Reagan Administration for neglecting the schools and trying to solve education's problems with "a quick quip or trite adage." Not to be outdone, President Reagan accused the NEA of "frightening and brainwashing schoolchildren" and Secretary of Education Bennett charged it with resisting "every promising and significant reform in the states . . .".

Yet in 1980 Reagan received 45 percent of the votes of NEA's members and, even after eviscerating the federal presence in education in his first term, he garnered 41 percent in 1984. Among its many other prominent features, the NEA is pluralistic.

As a high-level NEA insider for more than a decade, President Futrell understands the limitations of the cumbersome but quintessentially democratic body she heads. Her principal tasks in her third term are not merely organizational or managerial. She must translate the will of nearly two million educators into an acceptable platform that will respond to both the intertwined bread-and-butter concerns of the country's organized teachers and the national consensus for sweeping school reform. The NEA policy ledger is not yet balanced. Teacher salaries doubled to a $26,704 national average in a decade, but Futrell points out that the real increase after inflation was but 6.5 percent. Although NEA locals in such key states as California and Florida are deeply involved in teacher-centered reforms such as career ladders, merit pay, and master-teacher programs, NEA policy has been to oppose most measures that differentiate among teachers. As a member of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (along with Albert Shanker, her brilliant opposite number in the smaller but more risk-prone American Federation of Teachers), Futrell appended a list of reservations to its landmark final report that reinforced the NEA's blandly conservative image. At the 1987 convention, however, she persuaded the delegates to back the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards which the Carnegie group established the following year, even though the NEA has long preferred state standards boards. Earlier, she had nudged the union to accept testing of new teachers—a dramatic reversal of a tenaciously-held NEA policy.

The National Education Association takes few risks. Its reputation in the 1980s is as a reactive rather than a venturesome presence. It values the measured response based on sound research. As her union confronts the twin demands of effective representation and rapid professionalization, Mary Hatwood Futrell grapples with some of the stickiest choices any American educational leader faces. Parts of the organization are charging into the 21st century, promoting top-to-bottom changes in how schools are run, while others are living contentedly in a 1950s world of all-white Daisy Acres schools in the Wistful Vista suburbs of Middle America. Bennett said that the NEA represents the "status quo incarnate." Futrell knows that he was wrong, but proving it remains one of the toughest tasks in American education.

private gain?"[2] Even while salaries and benefits in most public jurisdictions mount to respectable levels, the attractions of competing fields outstrip them in a glaringly uneven race. Former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul A. Volcker, who became the unsalaried Chairman of the National Commission on the Public Service upon leaving government, noted in a speech, "The idea that we can settle for mediocrity in our public services would, in time, become an invitation to mediocrity as a nation . . . Somewhere it is written: 'The best shall serve the state.' I don't care whether that sentiment ever gets chiseled in stone. But I do think we all should care that it be part of the American ethic and that we make it possible for the sentiment to be a reality."[3]

If public service exerts a pull in any direction, it is toward state and local government where, according to Volcker and countless others, the immediacy of live, here-and-now issues still attracts well-motivated recent college graduates. The trend was especially pronounced during a decade of malaise and retrenchment throughout federal Washington, where government was the problem, not the solution, according to the departed Reagan Administration. Slowly but possibly not surely, a scattered group of professional and graduate schools began in the mid-1980s to help alumni(ae) who chose the public career route. By mid-1987 approximately 20 loan-deferment and forgiveness programs had taken root at some of the nation's best-known universities.[4] Buttressing this developing consciousness were other signs of encouragement for public service: the creation in 1986 of Campus Compact, a coalition of 120 college and university presidents committed to creating public service opportunities for their students, and data from the ACE-UCLA survey of 1986's freshmen (the question was omitted for 1987) that nearly 70 percent claimed to have performed volunteer service during the previous year.

. . . rapid economic gratification, access to the heavy action, and . . . life in the fast lane will remain the dominant personal themes of . . . youthful high achievers.

But these programs offer only scattered and unjustifiable indications that youthful blue-chip talent may choose public interest careers. The quest for rapid economic gratification, access to the heavy action, particularly in the newer, fast-growing fields, and the seductions of life in the fast lane will remain the dominant personal themes of many, possibly most, youthful high-achievers. For every young careerist who had become disillusioned with the rat race and had exchanged a high-paying, high-powered job for the uncertainties and intangible rewards of good works or social reform,[5] countless others were jostling for position as a potential successor.

Education at its various levels—elementary-secondary, higher, adult, job-oriented training and retraining—has

become the largest employer in the United States. It costs more than any other human services field and employs the most people. Moreover, it affects the largest proportion of the population (for all practical purposes, close to 100 percent, for periods ranging up to 20 years) and, unlike any other, is both free and compulsory until the mid- or upper teens, — a devastating combination. Its pervasiveness in national life is too obvious to explain or analyze; its distinctive impact and characteristics are embedded in our collective national character. Of the public services, only health and the military can compete in cost and numbers, but, except in times of crisis, the military influence on the attitudes and behavior of Americans is slight and usually of short duration. Yet we traditionally have known and understood who our military leaders are and how they are likely to think about any matter within their domain. We know where they come from. The enlisted troops they command are the products of a broadly representative American cross-section with diverse motivations: job security and advancement, training and economic benefits for later life, desire for travel and adventure, patriotism. The best of their future leaders have surmounted steep competitive barriers, although very few have come through the enlisted ranks, to advance through the service academies or post-secondary institutions and onto the leadership track. At the summit, flag-level officers have customarily combined senior command experience (a spot of combat action helps a military career), ability, and highly-focused executive-level training in proportions that usually match up well with their heavy responsibilities. The process is usually called card-punching.

In education, the path to the front office, if not to large-scale policy responsibility, is simple and even more clearly marked, especially in one particular. It is virtually obligatory that the future principal, supervisor, or superintendent pass through a professional apprenticeship as a classroom teacher. Only a microscopic portion of those in such posts—the stray coach, librarian, counselor, or specialist, for example—can sidestep this requirement. Sea changes in educational leadership may have occurred in the past century, but that single fact of life, which is simultaneously a spur and a burr, remains largely unchallenged, indeed, readily accepted, throughout the appointive or meritocratic strata of public schooling. It is folly to contest the healthy proposition that schooling takes place in the classroom and that experience there is matchless preparation for those who would lead. But it is equally ludicrous to assume that training and performance as a

It is virtually obligatory that the future principal, supervisor, or superintendent pass through [an] apprenticeship as a classroom teacher.

classroom teacher automatically provide the background, tools, and insights a future leader may require. Side-tracking ambitious and otherwise capable young professionals with little aptitude for teaching into a line of work in which they may be foredoomed to do poorly—to the detriment of their students and the institution—may also not be sound personnel practice. Despite the manifold attractions and improving status of teaching as a profession, a minimum of three and possibly as many as ten years at it could turn a potentially brilliant future manager/leader away from a field badly in need of that inferior or unwilling teacher's other gifts.

Providentially, the nationwide movement for school improvement may help to ease the choice. Although only scattered voices have called for flexible or alternative credentialling for either teachers or administrators—the state of New Jersey in particular and non-public education in general are the best-known exceptions—the single largest item in the in-boxes of nearly every reformer, the universally acknowledged key to unlocking the door to better schooling in America, is a dramatic upgrading of the profession of teaching. One after another, the reports on the state of American education opened with "a chapter of frenzied metaphors describing the desperate plight" of the schools.[6] With few exceptions, they ultimately discoursed lengthily on transforming teaching into a truly well-respected profession. Historians of education will record that nearly every state in the union did or promised to do something concrete to rectify old wrongs and turn a vastly underappreciated line of work around to place it on a plane comparable to that of other, more respected professions.

Implicit in all [incentive programs] was an undisguised pitch to lure smarter, higher-achieving students into the teaching fold . . .

The means to these laudable ends varied from state to state and from organization to organization, with the reports offering a melange of prescriptions including better starting salaries (they rose, on a national average, roughly six percent in a year to an average of $19,000 for beginning teachers in 1987),[7] merit pay, career ladders, flexible career options, stiffer requirements for state certification, pre-service fellowships and in-service training, internships and residencies, paid sabbaticals, and countless other incentives and remedies. Implicit in all was an undisguised pitch to lure smarter, higher-achieving students into the teaching fold by offering them a markedly better deal than their predecessors had received. But those already in the classroom would also receive the new packages, usually automatically but in a few states only after proving their qualifications in standard tests. Typical of the genre was the thoughtful report of the California Commission

on the Teaching Profession, *Who Will Teach our Children?: A Strategy for Improving California's Schools*,[8] which appeared in November 1985 (and may be dead in the water in 1989). The report takes a serious look at the Californians who were then en route to the classrooms and, ultimately for some, the front offices and executive suites of the state's local school systems. One of a small minority of reports on reform that mentioned the preparation of administrators, *Who Will Teach . . .?* covered the waterfront. In a noteworthy chapter, "The Story of a Career," it traced an ideal (or idyllic) odyssey in teaching from the decision of high school student Helen Armstrong to become a California teacher through a thoroughly enlightened university training phase to advancement in a distinguished career, the coveted rank of mentor teacher, and, finally, at age 60, active retirement that included a part-time consultancy with the school system and emeritus status at the local university. In her peak earning years, Ms. Armstrong's annual salary would be $68,250 in 1985 dollars.

For what it set out to say, the California report cannot be faulted. Nevertheless, the title and the assumptions that underlie it are misleading, for the only references to the processes of finding and signing up the people who presumably will carry out the "strategy for improving California's schools" are fleeting and inconclusive. Like many of the other manifestoes on reform—and the Sacramento report is one of the top few—*Who Will Teach . . .?* carefully avoids comment on the current crop of teachers who are destined to remain in the schools for another decade or more. Instead, it analyzes numbers and the generic problem of recruitment, and issues a bland call for a better class of teacher:

> "Thousands of people who never before considered becoming a teacher must now be persuaded to enter teaching as a career."
>
> "The challenge is not simply to find the needed number of teachers. The challenge is to place highly qualified, trained, and motivated teachers in all California classrooms."
>
> "During teacher shortages in the past—most recently in the 1960s—standards were lowered. Many unqualified people got teaching jobs and gained tenure. This time, California must halt that reflex response."
>
> "Education in the 1980s and 1990s must bid for new talent in an increasingly competitive labor market. Despite California's best efforts to make teaching a more

attractive profession, this competition will make recruiting new teachers more and more difficult."

By the late 1980s, this 1985 appeal had become a nearly national norm. Less than a year later, it was to acquire added legitimacy when the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's landmark *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* powerfully reiterated the overpowering need to raise the standards of our teachers through a comprehensive restructuring (a favorite word in reform jargon) of schools and the teaching profession.[9] Throughout the Carnegie and California reports as well as *Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group* of deans of high-status schools of education and others,[10] one of several key purposes is ubiquitous: to persuade bright and caring young people to enter a grossly underrated field that was supposedly to undergo a thoroughgoing rebuilding and that would offer its talented newcomers greatly enhanced substantive and psychic rewards. These would embrace such once-unimaginable possibilities as concrete involvement in running the schools and designing curricula.

In none of the appeals to tomorrow's teaching force did the 'restructurers' hint that recruits could aspire to a life beyond the classroom.

So went the prevailing policy wisdom of the more thoughtful reformers. But their consensus does not automatically extend beyond the classroom and the teacher's lounge. Elevating the status of teaching and teachers was becoming a self-contained goal. Laudable and long-overdue, it was also a central force in the first flush of school reform but not necessarily in the far less orderly universe of educational governance. In none of the appeals to tomorrow's potential teaching force did the "restructurers" hint that recruits could aspire to a life in education beyond the classroom. Once a carpenter always a carpenter, albeit a more privileged one with better tools, a heftier pay check, and a voice in the building contractor's decisions at the site. Working conditions could improve, and teacher power could become a transcendent force, but something was still missing. No one was publicly viewing the presumably improved aspirants as future principals, supervisors, or superintendents with big-ticket executive authority in their new field. It seemed to suffice that teacher-focused incentives would keep them content and creatively effective as their teaching careers unfolded. The satisfactions Helen Armstrong found in a richly varied 35-year professional teaching career were to become available to a new generation of American teachers. And that would be plenty good enough for them.

Education's pitch to revitalize its instructional corps will

doubtless bear early fruit. It comes during an advantageous convergence of the demographic currents in the field. It responds to unspoken but barely hidden impulses of many young people to look beyond saturation-level material success. It enables capable and caring young people to escape with dignity what many consider to be the unholy entrapments of technology. And it serves to remind job-seekers that the recently expanded perquisites of the field are not all that is good about it. Among the attractions of teaching in the vast majority of school districts in America are improving salaries and professional advancement opportunities, excellent health and retirement benefits, strong support from unions or professional organizations, exceptionally liberal vacation policies including eight- to ten-week summer hiatuses, no weekend and only occasional compulsory evening work (beyond the paper-correcting, lesson-preparing, and other duties that have traditionally interfered with the "free" time of teachers but which may be no more onerous than those of many other professions), and a stimulating, people-oriented ambiance that few specialties in corporate America can match. And in some sections of the country, as well as in such authoritative pronouncements as *A Nation Prepared*, the first signs of serious control of school buildings by teachers, and not full-time administrators, were beginning to appear. Small wonder that larger numbers of higher-quality applicants, including a growing coterie of career-switchers and retirees, were beginning to choose teaching even though most knew that the 35-hour work week and the 38-week work year were becoming relics of an idealized past, and that the teaching force of 1988 was "not only 'dispirited' but less empowered than it was five years ago."[11]

. . . in some sections of the country . . . the first signs of serious control by teachers, and not full-time administrators, were beginning to appear.

What kinds of future teachers were beginning to enter a pipeline that would also channel humanpower into education's policy levels? Do they wear the gloss of the best and the brightest? Or were they merely the best and brightest who happened to be available after the more lucrative fields had completed their recruiting and weeding?

To put it bluntly, the teaching rookies of the late 1980s numbered few who might have rejected Rhodes scholarships or chosen schoolteaching over neurology or international finance. To quote a 1987 report of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE):

> "Education students can be described accurately as 'a solid B.' Upon graduation they have cumulative grade

point averages in the 3.0 range, and similar averages in their academic major as well. They achieve slightly higher grades in their Education courses. Education students also have nearly a 3.0 average in their general liberal arts courses, which are prerequisite to entry into teacher preparation programs.

The data that are available support the conclusion that prospective teachers are college students of average verbal and math abilities, as indicated by the average SAT math scores of 475 to 509 and SAT verbal scores of 451 to 476 . . . The typical teacher education student is in the top third of his or her high school graduating class."[12]

. . . the teaching rookies of the late 1980s numbered few who might have rejected Rhodes scholarships or chosen schoolteaching over neurology or international finance.

Unfortunately, these unimpressive statistics are sitting ducks. They portray neither leaders in the making nor the raw material of the high-grade teachers America's schools must have. Rather, they describe a group of college students who would have been marginal academic achievers 30 years earlier when far fewer high school graduates attended college, admission standards and grading were tougher, and core curriculum requirements sometimes defeated even the best students. Undeniably well-motivated (90 percent cited "helping children grow and learn" as a reason for becoming teachers), tomorrow's teachers nevertheless showed "little interest in teaching handicapped children, low-income children, and the child of low ability." Three-fourths of them wanted "a traditional classroom" in "a traditional school" in "a middle-income neighborhood" with "children of average ability"—in other words, a repetition of their own school experience, with one possible exception: The new teachers probably would not be as good as their predecessors. "From the data," the AACTE report continued, "it would appear that inner-city schools will have trouble finding teachers. Eighty-two percent . . . indicated that they prefer to teach in rural or suburban environments. Only 18 percent, given the choice, would opt for urban areas, and most of those would prefer cities under 500,000. Less than four percent of the students indicated that they would prefer a major urban area for their first teaching position."[13]

If their reactions are similar to those of their immediate predecessors, those in the classroom today, these future teachers will probably like their work. According to a survey based on field work with a sample of over 1,000 teachers in May and June 1987, "The proportion of teachers saying they are satisfied with their job has risen by a significant four percentage points from 81 percent (1986) to 85 percent (1987).

And the proportion of teachers saying they are likely to leave the profession during the next five years has dropped by about five percent, from 27 to 22 percent." Moreover, *The American Teacher 1987* points out, teachers with fewer than five years' experience showed the largest jump in morale over the previous year, and "are now considerably less likely than formerly to think they will leave the profession within the next five years."[14] And in the fall of 1987, only a few months after these data were collected, the ACE-UCLA survey revealed that even in a "me-me" decade that made the 1970s seem like an era of unbridled altruism, over eight percent of incoming college freshmen leaned toward careers in teaching as compared to 4.7 percent in 1982.[15]

More people want to teach, or say they do, but they may not be anything like the best that our universities have to offer.

These are mixed signs. More people want to teach, or say they do, but they may not be anything like the best that our universities have to offer. The implications for producing a top-flight crop of in-house leaders—principals, supervisors and front-office professional staffers, superintendents, and senior state officials—are unclear. But they cannot be favorable. Today's 18- to 24-year-old age group is smaller and arguably less well educated than its predecessors. Within this group lurks a powerful time bomb: the pronounced absence of future male teachers. If current trends continue, fewer than one in ten of the teachers of the 1990s, possibly as few as five percent, will be men. And in a world of greatly expanded business and professional opportunities for women, the pool of first-class female teachers of the future threatens to be both shallow and of uncertain quality. Even the direct language of the California report on tomorrow's teachers—"As more professional career opportunities become available to women, education can no longer count on recruiting the best and brightest women as teachers"[16]—underestimated what may prove to be the steepest barrier to getting qualified women into high-level posts in the schools. Nearly the same caveat applies to members of minority groups, who once flocked to the schoolroom but now gravitate to business and non-teaching careers where doors to the highest levels of executive responsibility may still be shut to them but where opportunities for handsome incomes, professional development, and career mobility are generally nearby. Few would want to be reminded that their understandable reluctance to take on a teaching career and an eventual position of leadership in the schools may be depriving tomorrow's minority group students of the role models so many desperately need.

Virtually identical obstacles deter the schools from finding

Terrel H. Bell: The Educationist as Top Fed

Few trained educators have touched more bases than has Terrel H. "Ted" Bell. Teacher, principal, superintendent, university professor, chief state school officer, U.S. Commissioner of Education, and U.S. Secretary of Education (1981-85), he is the successful product of a system he has vowed to change, an Ed.D-holding educationist to the core. His resume in education is roughly comparable to that of George Bush, a Bell icon, in politics. It groans under the weight of conventional jobs, books, and associations. His card has been punched in all the right places.

Personable and grandfatherly, Ted Bell blends smoothly into a crowd and defers easily to more glamorous counterparts. In separate incarnations in Washington in the Nixon and Ford years, he got along by going along. A moderate Republican who understood where Congressional Democrats were coming from, he irritated only the far right fringe elements of his party while displaying a sure stroke in the tricky tides of politics along the Potomac. The national associations representing the bulk of education's special interests knew Bell would give them a fair hearing.

By the time Ted Bell came to Washington in 1981 as Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, the signals had switched. Democrats and moderate Republicans were the enemy. The bipartisan education coalition in Congress was about to collapse. The new Administration's agenda for education was an anti-public education amalgam of such controversial issues as tuition tax credits, prayer in the schools, and, at the top of the list, the earliest possible elimination of the hated federal Department of Education. These were not Ted Bell's highest priorities. A test of wills between the potent New Right and a diminutive educationist was inevitable. How Bell managed to remain loyal while leaving much of the Administration's program to the zealots is one of the more fascinating sagas of the Reagan years.

Long before his duty tour as a mid-level Nixon appointee in the early 1970s, Bell believed that the federal government had a vital place in national educational policy, not the pivotal role that some of his more liberal counterparts might have urged, but a unique position from which to develop accurate data for the states and local jurisdictions, help special and underserved populations, and furnish a forum for airing education's nationwide problems. Though he had publicly supported the creation of a federal Department in testimony before Congress in 1979, Bell was prepared to compromise, at least on the surface. At first, he proposed replacing the

Department with a foundation vaguely akin to the National Science Foundation, which would preserve some of the historically important federal functions while assigning others to the states and other federal agencies. He did not press his case with enthusiasm. Bell probably knew from the start that the Congress would not consent to dismantling and downgrading education's hard-won cabinet-level status. First Bell and then the Administration backed off, and the issue passed into limbo before disappearing altogether. Although the Administration consistently treated the Department as a dumping ground for ideologues and political hacks, Bell's successor, William J. Bennett, later used the agency as a platform from which to fire criticism at nearly every segment of education (except for private schools) and to showcase his political ambitions.

The survival of the Department of Education spurred another key Bell objective: maintaining the federal education budget at a respectable level. Year after year, the Administration proposed huge slashes, Bell loyally but lukewarmly defended them, and the Congress almost automatically restored the cuts, even adding a billion or two for good measure. If Bell's performance appeared to be less than a profile in courage it nonetheless was effective, for he had achieved permanent, institutional recognition of a federal role in education in the face of powerful opposing forces. This was measurable in hard cash and symbolic presence. As a former state commissioner for both elementary-secondary and higher education, he knew the true capabilities of the states and understood more clearly than his superiors the need for a pipeline of federal dollars to help out.

When education's historians chronicle the 1980s, many will credit Ted Bell with triggering the school reform movement of that decade. He didn't—it was already under way—but his participation was crucially important. With his bureaucratic and budgetary battles generally under control after two stormy, often humiliating, years, the Secretary created the 18-member National Commission on Excellence in Education which produced the blockbusting *A Nation at Risk* of 1983 complete with its "rising tide of mediocrity" and unabashed assertion that "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." Whatever its substantive merits, this document, more than any other in a 50-foot shelf of reports in the 1980s on school reform, awakened the nation, especially its politicians and editorialists, to the problems of its schools. It is Ted Bell's legacy.

and hiring first-class teachers of mathematics and science, and those with bilingual skills. Like retirees or potential second careerists who may be richly qualified to teach these subjects, many who might otherwise want to teach have never bothered with the pedagogical courses that are still the obligatory staples of teacher training and state certification. But, according to a survey of surveys released in 1988, "the percentage of future teachers majoring in education has doubled: from 40 percent in 1966 to 80 percent in 1987 . . . the percentages . . . majoring in the biological sciences, English, history or political science, humanities, fine arts, mathematics, physical sciences, and social science have all declined significantly."[17]

Long-awaited legislative and administrative actions are finally making a profession of teaching. At the other end of the pipeline, however, the organizational culture of the schools remains largely unaffected. Exceptions abound throughout the country, but the national norm is probably not appreciably different in 1988 from what it was in 1968. Some future leaders consider their exposure to the ethos of life in the schools to be an indispensable part of their preparation for management and decision-making. Others acquire and never relinquish the belief system they find there. Still others come away from their four to six years as teachers baffled and unsure exactly how schools should run.

Few [women and minority group members] want to be reminded that their reluctance to take on . . . an eventual position of leadership . . . may be depriving tomorrow's minority group students of the role models so many desperately need.

The future leader passing through a teaching stint finds a business that still gets little serious respect and is under constant scrutiny. The recognition that it is beginning to receive connotes neither respect nor status, only a grudging acknowledgment from politicians that teachers probably deserve a better break. In all but a few settings, daily performance requirements are stipulated by impersonal outside authority. Virtually every facet of a teacher's work life remains closely regulated, in an absolute and literal sense, by the state. Sometimes beneficent but just as often insensitive or even cruel, bureaucracy is ubiquitous. Seniority is all but inviolable; rapid advancement based on proven merit is mostly unknown and is a red flag to teachers' organizations and union locals. Many classroom veterans are inspiring mentors who are also territorial and wedded to the tried and tested. Unsurprisingly, original or creative approaches are officially discouraged when they threaten established practice. For every Dade County, Florida, or Rochester, New York, where the school systems are pioneering some of the most exciting pro-student, pro-teacher developments in American education, 500 other school systems are still practicing unthinking

conformity while professing a desire for change. The often insuperable obstacles that still make teaching a dicey and frustrating occupation, especially in urban America where the need is the greatest, are richly documented in the Institute for Educational Leadership's *Working in Urban Schools*.[18]

No less discouraging for young professionals are other all but immutable facts of life. Books, supplies, and technical equipment are unevenly available, in poor repair, inferior—or all three. Opportunities for pertinent, paid in-service training are irregular or non-existent. The idea of private or shared offices, or even assigned work places outside of the classroom, is nearly unthinkable, while the teacher requesting secretarial assistance or the regular use of a telephone or personal computer would be laughed out of the building. In *The Empowerment of Teachers*, Gene Maeroff points out that teachers are hardly likely to feel that they have much power or credibility as professionals if, as is the case in nearly all urban schools, they are isolated from one another, must punch time clocks or sign in in log books in the main office, work in drab and dingy surroundings, and suffer other indignities that are all but unknown for professional workers outside of education.[19]

The recognition that [teaching] is beginning to receive connotes . . . only a grudging acknowledgement from politicians that teachers probably deserve a better break.

9 The Inadequate Incubators of Leadership

These limitations and deterrents are patently not the favorite subjects of education's overly criticized schools (colleges, departments, faculties) of education. Open season for pulverizing these backwaters of the American university lasts 365 days a year. They get little admiration from anyone, even as they claim to be willing to change. Scarcely mentioned in the decade's accumulation of reports on school reform, they nevertheless still occupy a vital position in education's quest for self-improvement. If teaching and school administration are professions, as devotees of reform proclaim they must be, then schools of education must gain the esteem their counterparts for law, architecture, or medicine take for granted. Yet Harvard University President Derek Bok echoes a strongly held sentiment in labeling them "faculties relegated to the margins of the university, fighting for their existence at a time when they should occupy center stage in the national effort to improve our public schools."[1] Moreover, says Bok, "they are inadequate incubators of leadership for the nation's schools." Bok's observations are especially disheartening because he pointedly included the Harvard Graduate School of Education, one of the nation's most respected, in his indictment.

Scarcely mentioned in the . . . reports on school reform, [schools of education] still occupy a vital position in education's quest for self-improvement.

Whether couched in these terms or in the more damaging tones of an observer who labeled them "education's smoking gun,"[2] education schools are widely held to be a frail link in the chain of educational decision-making. Yet, even as politicians and publicists are loath to identify them as a critical force in the profession of education, they remain part of that chain. They are still the major point of entry for education's future line executives, the principal dispenser of the formal learning and legitimation that stamp their later status in the system. To a debatable extent, too, they are—or should be—the producers of much of the knowledge that will equip tomorrow's leaders to assume positions of leadership. Despite doubts as to their competence, even their credibility, education schools remain indispensable.

. . . education schools are widely held to be a frail link in the chain of educational decision-making.

Much of the carping about schools of education as reputable trainers of tomorrow's policy-makers comes from some of their most distinguished graduates. In 1987 a foundation-supported National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, heavily populated by eminent professors in or connected to schools of education, entered the fray with a blistering assault on its profession. A classic example of its genre, *Leaders for America's Schools*[3] fairly exploded with proposals—literally dozens of "shoulds" clutter its 38 pages—to establish tougher standards, drum over 60 percent of the 500-plus institutions that train administrators out of the corps, tighten certification, and involve nearly every segment of education in training the top people. In other words, keep the "best" of what already exists, and, above all, see to it that the self-selected "best" departments of educational administration in schools of education remain in charge of the field.

Leaders for America's Schools had little quarrel with the current content of leadership training, although, as one academic commentator pointed out in *Education Week*,[4] presenting leadership as management (and presumably *vice versa*) had failed for 60 years. "Leadership in education," he noted, "must be rooted in the fundamental enlightenment of thought." Regrettably, he detected "more than an echo of anti-intellectualism" in the National Commission's report and a general preoccupation in the field with "skills" rather than ideas. Some 85 percent of all professors of educational administration, he observed, were the "blind heirs" of the earliest promoters of "scientific management."

The report appeared at a relatively quiet moment in the school reform movement of the 1980s, an ideal time for public discussion of what the reform literature had inexcusably overlooked: how education can set about training the leaders it needs. It failed to spur informed debate, however, as already negative positions hardened, and broad support for the report failed to develop. Indeed, the critique in *Education Week* was mild. More typical was a comment by Willis Hawley, education school dean of Vanderbilt University, that "most programs for training school administrators range in quality from embarrassing to disastrous." Reinforcing this image of a field holding little respect for itself and its graduates was a survey finding by two scholarly observers that only four percent of education's school principals and central office officials (including superintendents) bothered to read *Educational Administration Quarterly*, the professional journal of their field.[5]

When the slippage in the quality of teachers captured public and political attention in the early 1980s, the body politic of American education underwent major rumbles and convulsions. Literally hundreds of reports by prestigious commissions and thousands of pieces of legislation at the state level triggered sweeping reconceptualizations about how to prepare and reward classroom teachers. Within four years of the publication of the U.S. Government's *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, education schools were reporting a rejection rate of roughly 40 percent of the aspirants. Nationally, the report and strong follow-up actions of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, as well as the involvement of most of the better schools of education in the standards-raising work of the Holmes Group, promised a sharp refocusing and an across-the-board upgrading of teacher training.

It is far too early to determine how the reform-oriented substance of Carnegie, Holmes, and state-level laws and directives will ultimately alter schools of education. Although they have barely grazed the issues of leadership training, some positive, if indirect, spinoffs appear possible. Raising the quality of the teacher trainees, their curriculum, and the teaching profession itself should in time create a pool of talented potential leaders with classroom experience who are prepared to deal with the new dimensions of schooling. But getting at the tightly controlled departments of educational administration in many of the colleges will tax even the most enterprising reformers. Staffed by firmly entrenched and tenured faculty, these departments have long been redoubts of managerial theorists, planners, and ex-superintendents who deeply resent the charges of inadequacy and lack of relevance that swirl about them. But the charges have substance. A representative cross-section of their products—principals, superintendents, and central office professionals—asserted in 1987 that their graduate studies had left much to be desired. Only 23 percent found these studies "essential" while even the 57 percent who judged them to have been "useful" noted that they valued the professional contacts they made during training more highly than they did their course work.[9]

. . . getting at the tightly controlled departments of educational administration . . . will tax even the most enterprising reformers.

10 Changing the Mix

Career-switching is as American as college football. No other society practices it as diligently or with such gusto as we do. Some of the least likely, most credential-happy professions—architecture, medicine, law, engineering—are fair game for people who may have guessed wrong the first time around and are prepared for the deprivations and indignities of retraining. In many fields, gifted and mature individuals simply cross over without breaking stride or losing status. Military officers become corporate executives, government officials find new lives as newspaper columnists, athletes are transformed into broadcasters, scientists become ambassadors. The range of possibilities is almost endless.

School systems are not interested. They practice a peculiar brand of snobbery within their own family. Professedly democratic in most respects, they are slow to acknowledge that the manifold talents of leadership may be transferable. The persuasive regional sales manager may be an ideal head of a local arts council. And there is no reason to doubt the prospects of the president of a profitable auto parts manufacturing firm in a new role as chief of procurement for a large metropolitan hospital. But these things do not happen in elementary and secondary education, where school boards and senior careerists stoutly resist placing outsiders in senior positions. The democratic process dictates that, whatever their qualifications and views regarding education may be, elected representatives call the shots. This political authority is unchallengeable, and properly so. Equally unchallengeable, though, is the professional belief system of the people's choices and the salaried executives who carry out their mandates. And they are not about to open their doors to non-members of their club.

. . . school boards and senior careerists stoutly resist placing outsiders in senior positions.

The issue of second careers in education is far from new, as the instructive tale of the National Program for Educational Leadership (NPEL) of the early and mid-1970s reveals. At the core of this imaginative effort to inject fresh talent and perspectives into educational leadership was the notion that effective people from other fields had much to offer the schools. Liberally funded by the then-U.S. Office of Education, NPEL was designed to retool 100 carefully screened individuals (62 finally participated during the program's five-

year duration) through 18-month reorientation programs based at seven universities around the nation with Ohio State University as the flagship sponsor. Participants were not degree candidates, although they could take courses they and their professor-mentors considered appropriate. They spent the bulk of their time in short, school-based assignments, independent and directed research, travel, meetings with practitioners and experts, and professional conferences. It was a total immersion in the schoolhouses, think tanks, and front offices of education—a nearly seamless transition from one field to another. The 62 future leaders acquired superb insights that, by all objective criteria, should have proved useful to school systems throughout the country.

The schools were not buying. They displayed almost no interest in these dedicated, education-oriented stockbrokers, business managers, ministers, military officers, and journalists. They wanted their own insiders, not retreads from other endeavors, even though the retreads were successful professionals who had sacrificed nearly certain advancement and financial gain and, more important, were an extraordinarily gifted, combat-ready group of true believers. Too, they came along at a time when education's leadership was stumbling and when service in the public interest still enjoyed some prestige. A few managed to obtain short-lived posts in school systems, but only one, a former U.S. Army lieutenant colonel (a born winner who could as easily have become a corporation president or U.S. Senator) ever became superintendent of a major urban school district. The NPEL experiment attracted almost no public attention and never became even a blip on the educational horizon. But if it proved nothing else, it demonstrated that school systems were and probably still are unwilling to venture into unknown terrain in scouting for new talent. They feel no need to venture anywhere. For them, tomorrow's executive talent is in the classroom, teaching the children, or in the front office on the lower rungs of the managerial ladder.

. . . school systems . . . are unwilling to venture into unknown terrain in scouting for new talent.

11 THREE TICKING TIME BOMBS

The numbers for women, blacks, and Hispanics in educational leadership are deeply disturbing. However they are interpreted, the best available projections show a profile of emerging educational leadership for the 1990s that will most emphatically not mirror the growing diversity and pluralism of the nation's public school students. Regrettably, it is as predictable as tomorrow's dawn that the upper echelons will remain heavily white, male, and middle-aged even as the school population becomes more than one-third minority within a decade or less. To add to an already unpromising prospect, some of the few signs of progress, as revealed in the examples that follow, may be illusory or short-lived.

The status of women in positions of political and educational clout is typical. They represent 53 percent of our population, but only three states have women governors, and only 25 of the 535 Members of the 100th Congress (two Senators and 23 Representatives) were women. In the state capitols in 1988, 1,157 of 7,461 legislators (15.5 percent—a sharp rise from the 301, or four percent, of 1969), and six of the 50 chief state school officers are women, while in the 832 cities with populations exceeding 30,000, the total of female mayors is 92 (11 percent.)[1] Some of these totals represent impressive gains, and the statistics for education proper, with women holding over 30,000 (31%) of the 97,000-plus school board seats, are encouraging on the surface. But in the school systems themselves, women hold a bare four percent of the district superintendencies and only slightly more than 30 percent of the school principalships. Overall, women occupied 26 percent of all school administrative posts in 1984-85, a rise of but one percent in three years.[2] Across the educational street, in higher education, they occupy roughly 300 (or 10 percent) of the presidencies of two- and four-year colleges—but one-third of the 300 are members of religious orders, and 29 percent of the total head women's colleges.[3]

. . . educational leadership for the 1990s . . . will emphatically not mirror the growing diversity and pluralism of the . . . students.

Except in the classroom, where the female teaching population may escalate to well over 90 percent within a few years, the influence of women in the schools is neither pronounced nor equitably distributed. Further diminishing it is

Joe Clark: Rambo at the Ramparts

For a few months in 1988, the most controversial educator in America was a 48-year-old principal of a downtrodden school in one of New Jersey's poorest cities. He was a TIME cover story, a featured guest on national television and radio, and the subject of a forthcoming film. As he faced possible dismissal for arbitrarily suspending 66 students whom he called "hoodlums, thugs, and pathological deviants," Joe Clark of Eastside High School in Paterson was utterly certain that he had found the golden secrets to educating inner-city children: tough, no-appeal discipline; unchallengeable control by an all powerful, omnipresent administrator; and strong hands-on encouragement for students who are disposed to learn and behave. The flaws in Clark's design violate some of the most sacred canons of contemporary pedagogy. He couldn't care less.

Joe Clark's confrontational, name-calling style of leadership and human relations is badly out of phase in an age of therapy and sensitivity training. Civil libertarians and most educators decry his strong-arm methods. Some assert that he could never get away with them if he were not the black principal of a school with a low-achieving, overwhelmingly black and Latino student population. But both Ronald Reagan and former Secretary of Education William J. Bennett have sung his praises, and a senior White House official offered Clark a job if the Paterson Board of Education fired him. Nor is membership in Clark's fan club limited to office-holding political conservatives. He receives cash contributions from citizens from all walks of life in all sections of the country; the head of a New Jersey computer software company offered a ten-year $1 million package of scholarships for Eastside students to pursue computer-related studies in college—on condition that Clark remain at his post. And Ernest L. Boyer, the widely respected head of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the author of *High School*, said, "Joe Clark is sending out a signal about the need to clean up the climate. Who can quarrel with that? Most school critics couldn't survive a week in those institutions. So I say, two cheers for Joe Clark. On the other hand I'm troubled."

With a bullhorn in one hand and sometimes a 36-inch Willy Mays Big Stick baseball bat in the other, Clark storms through the hallways of his school at a pace of 15 miles per day. He works the crowd of 3,200 students like a veteran ward boss, pausing to offer help to one student, dropping homespun maxims to others ("If you can conceive it, you can believe it, and

you can achieve it."), and proclaiming, according to a TIME cover story, that "... everything emanates and ultimates from me." Nothing escapes his eye. Everyone—teacher, student, parent, custodian, front-office worker—is fair game for an intemperate Clark scolding or burst of affection. He has no apparent qualms about insulting a teacher in front of students or using the school's public address system to invite all virgins to the front office. His students love "Crazy Joe." His staff isn't always so sure.

Modesty and restraint are absent from the Clark persona. "I'm the star," he remarks. "There can only be one star." He compares his style to that of General Patton, who once slapped a hospitalized soldier, and, reports the *New York Times*, he denounces "affirmative action, welfare, and 'linguistic hocus-pocus' liberals." The hundreds of students he has expelled or otherwise managed to drop from Eastside—300 in one day in 1982, his first year as principal—were "leeches and parasites," while some of his teachers are "gutless, spineless, racist bastards." Even his friends get derogatory labels. The only Board member who voted against disciplining Clark in January 1988 was "a mere Puerto Rican."

Quotable Joe Clark is in education's front-line trenches or, more precisely, on its field of battle. The full array of urban school and social problems besets him every day that he steps into Eastside High School. All are acute and chronic: drugs, alcohol, lethal weapons, gratuitous violence, dropouts, sexual promiscuity, unhealthy and poorly fed students, pregnancy, truancy, indifference, low staff morale, and, far from last in impact, the dispiriting ambiance of academic failure. His statistics are mixed. Although scores on SAT tests for the minority who take them and on statewide proficiency tests for ninth-graders at Eastside are rising slowly, they lag far behind those at most of New Jersey's other schools. Clark has restored some order to the school, and his dominating presence is reassuring to caring parents and students. But the dropout rate has risen, and the reading scores of Eastside's seniors are in the lower third for the nation.

The long-run contribution by Joe Clark to the national debate in education may prove to be much weightier than his colorful performance in Paterson. He has spotlighted core issues in urban schools that the predominantly middle class school reform movement had shortchanged. And he has caused us to wonder aloud whether the prevailing enlightened wisdom on democratic or participatory leadership styles is worth five cents in the dangerous classrooms and corridors of the Eastside Highs of the nation.

the large floating population of education's "significant others"—the overwhelmingly male analysts, commentators, writers, aides, professional reformers, and national association executives whose work often significantly affects educational directions.

. . . the influence of women in the schools is neither pronounced nor equitably distributed.

For black Americans, leadership in American education remains a distant dream. In 1988 there were no black U.S. Senators, 23 black Representatives, a single cabinet member, no governors, no black chief state school officers (the most recent, Wilson Riles of California, was defeated by Bill Honig in a non-partisan election in 1982), 125 out of 15,000 school superintendents, fewer than 4,000 of 96,000-odd school board members, and roughly five percent of the nation's school principals. Although some categories are rising, the numbers are unpromising almost across the board. In only one-third of the largest 50 cities, where black mayors and superintendents hold office (not always simultaneously), is there any substantial degree of black control of the schools, and only one of these superintendents, Matthew Prophet of Portland, Oregon, occupied a post in 1988 in a system with a predominantly white school population.

Regrettably, these figures for black school leadership may actually represent a high-water mark, not a launching pad for further progress. Many of the trends are wrong, or the rates of advancement and accession are far too slow. More black superintendents are taking over city systems, but this is happening at a time when middle class white students constitute a dwindling minority in urban schools. While more black students are graduating from high school, fewer are entering college (although a very small increase occurred in the 1987-88 school year), and commencement time in 1986 saw a 27 percent drop from 1,116 to 820 in the number of black scholars receiving doctorates—more than half of those (421) in education but only 14 in engineering, 28 in the physical sciences, and 70 in the humanities. At the same time, professional schools—mostly in medicine, law, business, and dentistry—were reporting lower black enrollment.[4] Even though teaching long ago "became and remained an honorable and revered profession among black Americans," according to the distinguished historian John Hope Franklin,[5] wider opportunities in other once-restricted career, professional, and entrepreneurial fields have siphoned off much of the cream of the black employment pool. For many, advanced degrees and professional training only slow the path to deserved personal success. The relatively large number of successful black candidates for doctorates in education may be gratifying, but

the majority of the 421 were already occupying senior posts in the schools and were pursuing their doctorates on a part-time basis. In other words, only a few represented new blood. And the entering black teacher is "an increasingly rare commodity," according to an *Education Week* account of the extraordinary efforts of school systems to lure the few who were available for the 1988-89 school year into their employ.[6]

For black Americans, leadership in American education remains a distant dream.

The statistical differences among Latino national origin groups are substantial, and data for the Hispanic population as a whole are often misleading, especially since many states do not collect any information on them. But the same discouraging image of under-representation and cramped potential for access to the fast track is nevertheless obvious. Hispanics occupy fewer than two percent of all elected school board seats (1,116 of 96,000-plus) and only 200-odd of approximately 15,000 superintendencies (five of those in the nation's 44 largest school systems). Their caucus in the 100th Congress numbered 11 voting participants, their 123-member presence in state legislatures is nearly microscopic, and only one governor, Martinez of Florida, is of Latino stock. Like black Americans, and for most of the same reasons, Hispanics are not flocking to the teaching ranks, and those in education who display leadership traits often view education as a stepping stone to something else.[7] At the other end of the scale, moreover, is the unwelcome spectacle of current or future Americans who may be well on their way to becoming the next underclass. Of the three main groups, Cuban-Americans, who number six percent of our Hispanic-origin population, achieve at about the same rate as the rest of the American population, but the indicators for the Puerto Ricans (15 percent)—44 percent of families headed by women, 51 percent of births outside of marriage, unemployment rates double the national average—convey a distinctly discouraging picture. The real question, according to one analyst, revolves around the direction that Mexican-Americans, who number two-thirds of all Americans of Latino origin, will take, and the signs there are inconclusive.[8]

Behind these numbers are equally disheartening social forces, myths, and institutional and cultural biases, notably including a casual, even negative, federal government stance in the 1980s on equal opportunity and affirmative action. Questions still abound about how long-delayed fair representation can be made achievable across the board in education, which is supposed to be the most representative of our public institutions. Nearly all of the data for women and minority group members show impressive hikes over a 20-year

. . . [for Hispanics] the same discouraging image of under-representation and cramped potential for access to the fast track is . . . obvious.

period, but many of the gains are illusory or susceptible to misinterpretation, and the data do not properly reflect unmet social and political needs. The women and minorities who report on education, analyze policy, advise governors, run professional associations, head reform commissions, or staff legislative committees (except in the U.S. Congress, normally no shining example of equal employment opportunity, where the level of female staff representation in "soft" areas like education is surprisingly high) constitute an almost infinitesimal minority. White males rule the roost and are likely to remain in command for decades to come. At current rates, the climate for a genuinely integrated, or even desegregated, leadership corps in public education is chilly.

This highly charged subject evokes little outrage, publicly or in the corridors of power in education. The communications media usually applaud the appointment or election of qualified female or minority group board members, superintendents, and others, but they rarely editorialize on equality of representation at the top. Nor do politicians make anything of the issue. They are preponderantly on record as in favor of desegregation at the school level but are relatively unconcerned about who directs it and other school affairs from the front office. It normally suffices to present an attractive education plank in the platform; beyond hoping that improving financial rewards will lure better teachers into the fold, the matter of running the enterprise gets little attention and few prescriptions.

If the quality and composition of the leadership corps were to become a hot issue (a few financial scandals could accomplish that), we would doubtless witness much public hand-wringing, an atmosphere of crisis, and predictable political demagoguery. But even the revelation of 1983 that our disintegrating schools had turned us into "a nation at risk" failed to trigger calls to oust the scoundrels who had allowed it to happen. We chose instead to blame the teachers. Against that background, we are most unlikely to hear clear calls for a more pluralistic or representative body of educational policy-framers and managers. Even a federally-funded report of a media-savvy private educational research firm revealing that school administrators were an "insular group" that was out of step with the general public drew only a quick flurry of media attention before passing into history.[7]

Each of the three underrepresented groups has its own wish list for expanding its influence. Except where they accidentally intersect or overlap, as in the case of black and Latino women aspirants to leadership, they are largely

independent of one another and show little inclination to collaborate. Yet certain propositions and premises suggest a need for shared understandings on matters of power and leadership:

. . . the climate for a genuinely integrated, or even desegregated, leadership corps in public education is chilly.

- The fact of gender or minority status may still command (and deserve) special proactive legislative status, but the American public in the late 1980s does not aggressively back compulsory affirmative action, a policy that has not elicited large outpourings of popular support in any era. Whatever the political ambiance in the 1990s, there will be fewer bargain-rate rides to the top. Women and minority group members will have to earn their advancement the old-fashioned way—by working for it, often against odds that will be stacked against them without the actively enforced protection of governmental and judicial policy. Once on the ladder, though, their progress could be rapid because those in command are sharply attentive to the need for the diversity, special abilities, and political pluses that the newcomers will bring to their leadership positions.
- The electoral system is the ultimate, unrivaled source of real power, but women and minority group members use it far less adroitly than do middle-aged white males. With monumental exceptions, of course, they have displayed inadequate mastery of fund-raising, campaign tactics, issue-framing, coalition-forming, and the use of the communications media. The Presidential primary campaign of the Reverend Jesse Jackson in 1987 and 1988 demonstrated, for the first time in this century, that minority group members (and many other nominal stay-at-homes) will vote in very large numbers when they have issues and candidates that matter to them. This lesson can be applied across all political levels, including that of local school board elections, but the politicians of education, including women, blacks, and Latinos, appear disinclined to act on it. A major shame of American politics is the incredibly low turnout — sometimes in single digits—for elections to school offices in odd or non-Presidential election years.
- The largely dormant public service ethic is slowly reemerging in America. With it may come a less intense national preoccupation with high material reward and essentially selfish concerns. It may be far too soon to divert talented women, blacks, and Hispanics into education from the high-paying careers in investment banking and computer design that understandably attract

them at a time of still-expanding opportunity, but it is not too early to plant the right seeds in the minds of those who follow. Unless the teaching requirement for future career leaders is eliminated or relaxed, though, prospects for recruiting top-flight young women and minorities into the field will remain chancy. It is time for decision-makers to remove this millstone and to capitalize on the possible readiness of some excellent young people to enter the managerial and leadership ranks of education. At a minimum, each new recruit will bring 16 years of direct classroom experience to the job. That should suffice.

Targeted efforts to help mid-career professionals to compensate for . . . social or academic deficiencies may have lost both lustre and urgency.

- Single-shot leadership development programs for minorities and/or women warrant consideration, but not as most are now constituted. Those supported by the Ford, Danforth, Kellogg, and Rockefeller Foundations, among others, from the 1950s to the 1980s have proved to be useful, even career-enhancing, regimens for most participants. But the signals and climate have changed. Targeted efforts to help mid-career professionals to compensate for earlier social or academic deficiencies may have lost both lustre and urgency. These programs have tended to select preordained winners who would probably advance very nicely on their own, while they overlook late bloomers and talented individuals, often specialists who are not on the leadership track, with strong but less obvious leadership gifts. Too, the widely praised networks that emerge from such associations can easily evolve into exclusionary employment centrals based on shared experience or personal friendship rather than on demonstrated professional ability or promise. Such programs would have relevance in the 1990s were they to provide primarily skill- and issue-oriented inservice curricula for worthy mid-careerists and did not implicitly preselect tomorrow's leaders from within their ranks.

Once past these and other propositions about readying women and minority group members for the top slots in education, it is incumbent upon those now in power to place the issue on their high-priority watch list. The danger is not that these groups will create a ruckus—school people seldom rock boats—but that girls and boys, particularly those with dark skin and/or Hispanic names, may pass into adolescence and beyond believing, or at least strongly suspecting, that (a) most of the prevailing wisdom about education (and life) comes from the white women who teach them and the white men who boss the teachers, (b) the smartest people they

know or have heard about do not work in the schools, and (c) there must be something wrong in a system that proclaims democratic beliefs but does not give Mrs. Herrera or Mr. Washington a shot at running it.

12 A Dozen Propositions

We live in an untidy world in which almost nothing is as we think it should be. Even our supposedly common beliefs about schooling and the changes it must undergo are suspiciously vulnerable. If we can't agree on the purposes and functional modes of the schools in our many-sided democracy—the curious combination of beating out while emulating Japan seemed to dominate in the second Reagan Administration—how can we reach consensus on preparing people of promise to run them? Short answer: We can't and probably shouldn't.

No single correct rite of passage for tomorrow's leaders exists. Nor should it. To fashion a master set of attitudes and qualifications as the primary basis for certifying the leadership cadres of education in 50 states and more than 13,500 school districts is to engage in fanciful, possibly mischievous, thinking.

History and some of the current realities described earlier nonetheless suggest a usable context for thinking about finding and preparing leaders for the 1990s and beyond. Some of the premises and propositions in this backdrop have been around, if under-used, for a long time, while others stem from gradually accumulating evidence from outside of education. A few are distillations of state-of-the-art wisdom, which, in the case of leadership preparation in education, is a widely diffused collection of maxims, field experience, and research findings.

1. Leadership Can Be Learned. John Gardner says so—or at least that much of it can be developed in and by individuals.[1] With its array of war colleges and senior training regimens, the military services emphatically agree. The most successful large corporations spot and prepare their leadership elites through intensive in-house indoctrination and rarely hesitate to send them out for expensive but profitable fine-tuning at places like the Center for Creative Leadership (which every brigadier general in the U.S. Army also attends). The list of believers is endless. The proposition that leadership is not simply a natural gift, that its totality includes countless other qualities and circumstances, has gained acceptance

nearly everywhere. Some of the unlikeliest, least "natural" leaders function brilliantly at the helms of huge organizations. They have somehow learned what leadership is and how to do it.

2. **It Can Also Be Experienced and Observed.** We learn by imitation—of bosses and mentors (sometimes, but not always, the same person), peers, opponents, literature, drama—and by reading history and biography. Thomas Cronin, a noted authority on leadership and the Presidency, emphasizes learning from those who make things happen and from reading biographies of negative leaders as well as of those a future leader would want to emulate.[2] "*Plutarch's Lives*," says Cronin, "would be a good place to start." One of the most brilliant military leaders in our history, "the GI's general," Omar Bradley, urged senior army officers not to discount experience because "judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment." No amount of evening courses in educational administration can replace the insights gained from a difficult encounter with a hostile school board or parent group.

3. **Leadership Training Needs a Higher Priority.** The lower the ranking of leadership training on the public agenda, the worse it will be for our schools. The case is overwhelming. No enterprise can prosper, or even function adequately, without informed, ever-improving leaders. In the face of the harshest Department of State budget slashes since World War II, Secretary George Shultz simply refused in 1987 to accept cuts in the Senior Seminar in Foreign Policy, the year-long pre-Ambassadorial experience a small group of the Foreign Service's best diplomats undergo.[3] Every Secretary of Defense and military service chief since World War II has held firm when economy-minded legislators waved a threatening finger at the defense and war colleges where their soon-to-be flag-rank officers prepare for flag-level responsibility. Good training saves lives and money. Only a simple-minded corporation president would keep a fast-track executive from obtaining advanced training—or retraining—intended to enhance the company's competence and profits. Again, education comes up woefully short. Leadership training not only has no priority and appears in almost no budgets; except for two-or three-day single-issue institutes or seminars (school budgets customarily permit one per year per school executive, often in conjunction with national professional conventions), it does not exist. The idea of a year-long, nationwide executive training program on the military or diplomatic model would doubtless go nowhere in today's political climate. Yet it clearly warrants high-level

backing and early action by governments, foundations, and private donors.

4. Credentials Do Not Automatically Confer Competence. In its 1987 manifesto on preparing school leaders, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration urged policy-makers to create administrative licensure boards with tough standards and recommended the establishment of a National Policy Board on Educational Administration[4]—measures that could straightjacket a sector of education that desperately needs intellectual breathing space, fresh blood, and the existential experience of day-to-day practitioners rather than the often-irrelevant bromides of theoreticians and professional standards-setters. According to Richard Boyatzis, experience across a spectrum of professions demonstrates that when a group institutes a credentialling process, whether through licensing or requirements for advanced degrees, to enforce professional standards, there are two usual consequences: the exclusion of certain groups, and the establishment of mediocre standards. Credentialed people, Boyatzis found, are often those who are good at studying.[5] This enviable skill is not necessarily transferable to excellence, or even adequacy, in leadership. The subject of credentialling is explosive. The guardians of the faith are strong, but they need shaking up.

5. Teaching Experience Is Useful But Not Necessary. This proposition cannot be overemphasized. Of the 275-odd owners, presidents and general managers of major league franchises in baseball, football, basketball, and hockey in 1988, fewer than 20 percent had ever been professional, let alone major league, athletes before assuming top leadership positions. It is probably an equally safe bet that similar or even more lopsided odds would prevail in determining the percentage of Army generals who had been infantry foot soldiers or corporation presidents with experience as assembly line workers or foremen. And the same ratio of leaders as former troopers would doubtless hold for most other fields. A growing number of policy analysts are asking whether school administrators need to have had extended experience as teachers. They see few compelling reasons why and believe that eliminating or at least greatly reducing this virtually obligatory resume item would probably spur the recruitment of a broader variety of higher-quality candidates into school administration. They may well be right.

6. Colleges and Universities Can't Train Leaders. They can inform potential leaders. They can train managers, administrators, and technical chiefs. They can provide a

superior respite for beleaguered leaders and matchless resources for them to take a relaxed and reasoned look at themselves and the issues—witness Michael Dukakis at Harvard, 1979-83. And they are chock-a-block full of gurus, brain-trusters, and beneficent mentors. But except for a handful of outstanding thinkers and a scattering of former corporation or government officials turned academics, professors know little about practical leadership, and the emphasis of most of them on reading, writing, and listening to lectures or holding forth in clubby seminars as the centerpieces of leadership development may be badly misplaced. Leaders should always have books at the ready on their desks and night tables, but training in leadership is not fundamentally an academic exercise. Moreover, the requirement for a scholarly doctoral dissertation tends to legitimate the institution, not the student. Skills in lucid writing (and speaking) are necessary tools for the aspiring leader; mastery of the techniques of arcane scholarly research is not necessarily the most accurate predictor of a future leader's success. Too often, the otherwise promising prospect gets bogged down in academic trivial pursuit.

7. Strongly Encourage Career Internships, Apprenticeships, and Residencies. Whatever they are called, these off-site clinical exposures are vital elements of a future leader's developmental portfolio. They should be obligatory early career experiences and not be confined to educational settings. The ambitious 32-year-old principal who appears destined for bigger things will already have been in and around schools for 27 of those 32 years. A residency in an assistant superintendent's office might be helpful, at least in consolidating a professional contact network if not in hard learning, but its long-range benefits are debatable. Closer to the mark for a future decision-maker would be a stint with a state legislative committee, a work-study tour in the mayor's office, or a short participant-observer assignment in the state or local budget and planning agency. John Gardner calls such assignments "cross-boundary experience." However they are labeled, they loom as an indispensable feature of the resumes of tomorrow's educational policy-makers. Future leaders will require across-the-board familiarity with a limitless array of social, cultural, human services, economic, and technical forces that affect our lives. The earlier they set about acquiring it, the better prepared they will be. The 25-year-old Education Policy Fellowship Program of the Institute for Educational Leadership has provided such in-service exposures for several thousand current and future policy-makers.

8. Promote Mid-Career Sabbaticals and Exchange Arrangements. The average superintendent's peers in higher education can count on a semester or full school year away from the academy every few years. The subject never arises in precollegiate education. Why aren't school leaders entitled to a school person's version of the same refreshening pause? The possibilities for using the time beneficially are endless: do community volunteer service; visit other, different school systems and agencies (something school leaders almost never do); learn Spanish or whatever the other local language might be; swap jobs with a colleague (suburban-urban, public-private, black-white, north-south); perform rotational duty tours in banks, think tanks, newspapers, high-tech industrial plants, day care and preschool centers, or government agencies; write a book; ride the circuit of professional associations and leadership development centers—or all of these and more. The enterprising superintendent or senior state education official would return from this kind of experience wiser and far more open to the diversity, ambiguity, and growing dependence on technology that characterize life in the America students will encounter. The President of Haverford College was a better leader after a job as a garbage collector. Participants in the Senior Seminar in Foreign Policy do volunteer work in social agencies. Everyone benefits.

9. Raise and Vary the Standards for Leadership Training. The movement of much inservice training for leaders away from colleges of education and their rigid curricula is promising. Such institutions as the short-duration single-issue programs of the National Academy for School Executives (an activity of the Association of American School Administrators—AASA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), among others, offer participants a welcome change of pace, new information, and opportunities to connect with peers—an aspect of training that many participants consider to be their best feature. On the whole, though, they do not do enough to make them more effective leaders. Neither they nor the traditional doctoral programs scratch the surface of pertinent social science research on leadership. The armed services, business, and public administration, to take three of many relevant examples that Scott Thomson of NASSP cites, have long adapted their leadership development efforts to the real needs of leaders. Their training features in-depth personnel assessment (a major NASSP emphasis), case study approaches, collaborative analysis and problem-solving, and flexibility—not the outdated

and fixed lecturer-student, assigned-reading, scientific-management models that have been the mainstays of training in educational administration at most universities for most of the twentieth century. Only a handful of the 500-plus graduate programs in the field are breaking the mold.

10. Decentralize and Individualize Training. The lack of national criteria, or even of a common body of knowledge, for training educational leaders is not all bad. On the contrary, it may prove to be a boon to the field. By the time they have achieved mid-career status, administrators and leaders rather than the licensing boards may be the best judges of what they do or don't need in the settings in which they operate. Without the pressures of a fixed curriculum to fret about, they can set about filling gaps in their knowledge and pursue leads to data and experiences that may fall beyond the scope of conventional training. The prospect of individualizing their development, instead of exposing it to the homogenization or leveling out that is inevitable in a large group-learning ambiance, would motivate many reluctant trainees to expand their professional view. In some respects, personalizing development in this way would be an extension of the model of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that guides the education of millions of children with disabling conditions. With technology and self-guided instruction coming to the fore throughout education, the era of the IEP for all learners, including education's professional best and brightest, may not be far off.

11. Leadership Training is Not Card-Punching. The military officer, corporate manager, or civil servant who completes leadership development training courses alpha, beta, and gamma receives an appropriately punched metaphorical career progress card and moves on, almost as if on automatic pilot, to conquer new worlds. This practice is wrong and should be reexamined. Leadership training should not be an obstacle course of experiences and exposures that lead to guaranteed advancement on a set schedule. Career advancement should not be the central purpose of senior training but rather a natural outcome of it. The other side of the coin is the tendency of some executives to avoid such training precisely because it does not absolutely guarantee increased responsibility and more prestigious titles. Too, some executives sense the risk of being sidetracked or leapfrogged while in a lengthy training program. These cautions are not yet applicable to education's top people. They will be when serious senior training catches on.

12. Learn from the Past. This proposition is almost too

banal to mention. It is customarily introduced as a throw-away platitude instead of the clue to productive insight that it ought to be. The good leader is attuned not only to successful precedent but to failure that can instruct. In *Thinking in Time,* Richard Neustadt and Ernest May demonstrate persuasively how present policies and actions flow from the past. Although history's lessons are malleable, it is possible to use them to positive effect if, as Ronald Steel puts it, the leader will "separate the known from the unclear and the presumed, avoid facile analogies, examine presumptions behind pros and cons, analyze (one's own) stereotypes, know the issue's history."[6] Unfortunately, many educational leaders pay little heed to the record, especially that of the less recent past. Institutional memory exists in most educational decision-making circumstances, but it seldom materializes as a usable presence, particularly when elected policy-makers are involved. The ten-foot shelf of notable literature on educational reform in the 1980s is nearly innocent of informed references to earlier, vastly illuminating bouts with nearly the same issues. All too often, history begins on the day the new leader takes office.

* * * * *

It belabors the obvious to reiterate education's permanent need for leaders of integrity and quality, both in school systems and in the larger public world of policies, decisions, and futures. This year's leaders are better qualified than last year's, but we cannot be certain that next year's will be better than those we now have. But they must be. Unless the schools and their political masters can find ways to attract into their front offices the kinds of informed, broad-gauged, open-minded talent that fills the top ranks of the most successful organizations in industry, communications, and science, high-level service in public education will soon exceed the capabilities of many of those who perform it. Of the approaches that cry out for consideration, the most insistent is that the field look beyond traditional pipelines and professional loyalties. School leadership is not just a noble calling for the chosen few who entered classroom teaching in their early twenties and pushed doggedly through the bureaucracy. It is an incredibly demanding job that calls forth extraordinary skills and insights—those of the nation's very best leaders.

With such recognition could come the beginnings of wisdom, or the practical realization that: the interests of schools, students, and communities demand concrete steps to

assure that tomorrow's leadership will be capable not just of managing in the old boy style but of infusing purpose and vision into public education; we get only the elected officials we deserve, especially when voter education is haphazard and turnout is in single- or low double-digit percentages of the eligible electorate; the people who run the schools need not come only from "the inadequate incubators of leadership"—the education schools—but are available in sufficient quantity and quality, throughout the professions, business, and science; a salary of $300,000 in 1989 dollars, double that of today's highest-paid public education officials, is not a penny too much for persons ultimately responsible for educating hundreds of thousands of children; and, to paraphrase von Clausewitz, the wars of education are too important to be fought solely by armies led by white, middle-aged male professionals. We must all get into the fray.

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About the Author

George R. Kaplan is a veteran analyst of the politics of education. A former career diplomat and official of the U.S. Office of Education, he directed the Washington Policy Seminar for the Institute for Educational Leadership in the 1970s and has written, lectured, and consulted extensively on educational leadership and related topics. His PHI DELTA KAPPAN article, "Hail to a Chief or Two: The Indifferent Presidential Record in Education," received a Distinguished Service Award in 1985 from the Education Press Association of America.

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